

DRAFT MINUTE

North East England Timber Transport Group

Meeting held at the Offices of Egger (UK) Limited, Hexham
at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 12th August, 2014

Present:

John Paterson, Chairman (JP)	Egger Forestry Products Limited
David Sulman (DS)	United Kingdom Forest Products Association
Councillor John Riddle	Northumberland County Council (Bellingham)
Andrew Douglas	Timber Transport Liaison Officer, Northumberland CC
Dick Phillips	Network Manager, Northumberland CC
David Woodhouse	Forest Enterprise
Peter Berry (PB)	Forest Enterprise
Dan Barry (DB)	BSW Timber
Roland Stiven (RS)	Timber Transport Forum
Andrew Kitching (AK)	Northwoods/Rural Development Initiatives
David Robson (DR)	Egger Forestry Management
George Nicholson (GN)	A & J Scott Limited
Robert Scott (RSc)	SGS Timber Transport
Stephen Swailes (SS)	Iggesund Forestry
James England (JE)	Dumfries & Galloway Council (South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer)
Richard Pow (RP)	Forestry Commission
Tom Coates (TC)	Egger Forestry
Katherine Evans Smith (KES)	Egger Forestry
Eddie Addis (EA)	UPM Tilhill
Martin Craig (MC)	UPM Tilhill
John Lees (JL)	UPM Tilhill
Hazel Newman (HN), Secretary	Egger (UK) Limited

Apologies:

Cameron Scott, NCC; Andrew Harper, CCC; Gary Leach, DCC; Max McLaughlan, FE; Keith Haywood, Taylormade Timber; Billy Wood, James Jones; Athole McKillop, Land Factor; Cameron Smith, Euroforest; Tommy Milburn, Euroforest; Ruth Bendell, NCC; Crispin Thorn, Forestry Commission; Mike Yerbury, Egger Forestry

No.

Action

1. Chairman, John Paterson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies.
2. **Review of Terms of Reference**
The established Terms of Reference for the Group were reviewed, and it was agreed that they remained appropriate. However, it was agreed that Northumbria Police should be advised of future meetings and invited to attend.
3. **'Roots to Prosperity'**
David Sulman, Executive Director of the United Kingdom Forest Products Association gave the meeting an update on the Northern England Forestry Sector Growth Plan entitled 'Roots to Prosperity' This initiative had been launched on 4th August, 2014, by Guy Opperman at the Egger UK plant, Hexham, with the aim of raising the profile of the forest sector and recognising its potential to support further economic growth across the region. The Plan was developed by a partnership including FC England, ConFor, UKFPA and the County Councils of Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland and North Yorkshire.

HN

Action

The launch had been well attended by representatives from all aspects of the industry, and clear messages were given regarding the urgent need to increase planting of commercial conifer crops across Northern England to sustain the sector and continue delivery of a wide range of benefits. DS stressed the importance of letting people know about the industry, and finding ways of encourage funding bodies, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, to engage with the forestry sector.

The next step will be to prioritise key actions from the 41 point Action Plan produced as part of the initiative. Amongst which are references to the need for support for timber transport related issues, including timber transport forums, the creation of a timber transport fund and investment in road infrastructure to facilitate the transport of timber on the public highway.

Liz Truss, on her succession in July to Owen Paterson as Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, had been invited to launch the initiative, but unfortunately was unable to attend. However, it was hoped that she would visit Hexham at a later date, when there would be another opportunity to bring the challenges facing the forestry sector to her attention.

4. Timber Transport Forum Update

'Tread Softly'

Roland Stiven briefly summarised the 'Tread Softly' document produced by the Timber Transport Forum earlier in the year. This is a guide which explains the limitations of the forest and public roads and describes the range of haulage vehicles used in timber Transport, and appropriate tyre configurations depending on road conditions. It focuses on lower impact technologies (tyre pressure control systems) which can be incorporated into timber haulage to help reduce road maintenance costs. The aim being to promote understanding and communication of the options available. Copies of the document are available upon request to either RS or HN.

RS/HN

Timber Transport Funding

RS informed the meeting that the last meeting of the Timber Transport Forum in June, had been combined with a field trip to Bumble Wood near Pickering in North Yorkshire, at the invitation of the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Quality Partnership. During the visit members were able to see the successful outcome of a traffic management plan agreed between the Local Authority and the industry, and upgrade of a FC forest road, which enabled timber to be extracted over a fragile road infrastructure set in the popular tourist destination of the North York Moors National Park.

The Group had then adjourned to Dalby Forest Visitor Centre, where a meeting of the Forum was held. High on the agenda was the subject of creating a Timber Transport Fund for England along the lines of the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme established in Scotland, where £2-3 million was annually awarded to projects which would facilitate the sustainable transport of timber in rural areas for the benefit of local communities and the environment.

Discussion took place regarding why such a fund was needed, and how it might be achieved (See Appendix 1). Alistair Speedie (Chairman of the GB Timber Transport Forum) had written to Dan Rogerson, MP, Minister responsible for forestry, on the subject of creating a timber transport fund in England. The letter was also copied to Robert Goodwill, MP, Minister responsible for local roads in England and Wales. Jeremy Walker, Chairman of the North Yorks Timber Freight Quality Partnership, had requested a meeting with Robert Goodwill on behalf of the Forum, made possible by his constituency being nearby Scarborough and Whitby. (See Appendix 2)

See attached

The Forum subsequently received a letter from Robert Goodwill referring them to a forthcoming Department for Transport consultation on how additional money

Action

announced for local roads should be allocated, and highlighting the role of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in local public investment. RS pointed out that while LEP's would invest in industry, it was not within their remit to directly invest in road infrastructure. It was important that momentum was not lost, and that advantage was taken of 'Roots to Prosperity' to find a way to promote the creation of a timber transport fund.

RS has written to Chairs of the Timber Transport Groups, requesting ideas on how the matter should be progressed. Andrew Bainbridge of North Yorks County Council had suggested a joint initiative between Councils in Northern England, and RS suggested that such a collaborative approach was more likely to be successful. Dick Phillips of NCC commented that it would be important to gather specific information on economic benefits arising from the industry (as well as people employed, social aspects such as leisure/tourism etc) which could be used to support bids for funding from either the Government or Europe. DP stated that due to Council cutbacks there were few resources available to gather statistics to support such bids. However, Barry Rowland, Executive Director of Local Services was a strong advocate of the industry and DP stated that he would be keen to be involved in any initiative which would attract funding for roads infrastructure. Councillor Riddle also suggested that Councillor Ian Swithenbank who was a Policy Board Member, with Highways in his portfolio, should be kept informed of any developments.

RS

Chairman, John Paterson, agreed with the need to quantify the value of the economic benefit to the region, and suggested that supporting evidence might be available in the Roots to Prosperity documents. Richard Pow, FC, suggested that information might also be available from the National Inventory, which could be drilled down to regional/county level at FC Headquarters in Edinburgh.

Rural Development Programme Funding

Richard Pow stated that there would be new grants available to forestry businesses within the new Rural Development Programme set to start in 2015. Details of future schemes are yet to be announced but it was thought that grant support might be available for kit for timber harvesting, extraction and primary processing equipment, as well as specialist timber and woodfuel haulage, training, business support, and advisory services.

Target areas for RDP investment are the environment, productivity (increasing the competitiveness and efficiency of farming and forestry), and rural economic growth. Growth programme funding will be channelled through Local Enterprise Partnerships, alongside which will run the LEADER programme, which will encompass projects identified by local communities, leading to jobs and growth in rural areas.

RP announced that the Forestry Commission has contracted a consortium of forestry specialists who will be available to offer free advice to those wishing to apply for the new grants available from January 2015. Support will be available for business planning and financial forecasting, as well as identifying technical solutions, and anyone interested in getting assistance should contact the Forestry Commission.

5. North East England Agreed Route Map

Dick Phillips stated that the latest version of the agreed routes map presented by the ARM Working Group had been accepted by the NCC Highways Department. If agreed by the main Group today, the map for Northumberland could now be placed on the national (TTF) website (approval from Durham County Council was awaited). It was emphasised that this was a live document and subject to change as issues arose, with any proposed permanent changes to the map being brought to Group meetings.

Andrew Douglas had been appointed NCC Timber Transport Liaison Officer, and he is the local authority contact to whom all enquiries should be directed regarding timber movement over consultation or non-designated routes, or any other issues relating to timber transport. **(Telephone number: 01670 623861; mobile: 07824351536)**

AD

	<u>Action</u>
It was agreed that AD will deal with consultations/queries on a case by case basis, and agree such things as traffic management plans with the individuals concerned. However, if issues were likely to involve permanent changes to road designations or have a larger, possibly more controversial, impact on timber movement in the area under discussion, they should be brought before the Group. If it proves that there is not enough time to discuss issues arising at the main TTG meeting, then the Agreed Routes Working Group should be continued, where such issues could be resolved and then reported back to the main Group. If necessary, those who had already served on the Agreed Routes Working Group would be contacted to see if they were prepared to continue as members.	AD/JP
DP informed the meeting that Northumberland County Council would like to publicise the Agreed Routes Map by holding an official launch of the initiative involving John Paterson and Barry Rowland. (This later took place on 17th September – see press article via this link: http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=6270&article=3425) AD stated that the map would be made available on the NCC website in the next day or two, and James England would ensure that it was put on the national Timber Transport Forum website. It was agreed that AD would make any future changes to the map agreed by the Group in liaison with JE. It was pointed out that the map key should include the statement that any road not categorised will default to a 'consultation route'. Discussion followed regarding public consultation. AD stated that once the ARM was publically available, it was NCC's intention to take it to relevant parish councils. Councillor Riddle commented that he was a member of the NCC Western Area Committee and he would spread the word there, which would be filtered down to parish councils. It was, therefore, unanimously agreed that the Agreed Routes Map presented to the meeting should be adopted.	See attached
6. Consultation with the Highway Authority and Felling Licences Richard Pow stated that now the Agreed Routes Map had been adopted the matter of consultation would be a lot simpler. When felling licenses were issued, a link would be provided to the map on the Council website, together with contact details if consultation was necessary. Following further discussion, it was agreed that the link could be provided at both the application and approval stages, thereby increasing awareness of the potential need for consultation.	JE/AD
7. Highway Issues in Northumberland Discussion took place on several current issues in hand, including the situation at Gleedlee Forest, where Greenhaugh residents were objecting to the route identified for timber haulage. The local Parish Council had recently held a meeting to emphasise their concerns attended by Andrew Douglas and Dick Phillips, and the matter was ongoing. Andrew Douglas went on to report that a review of the C205 at Stonehaugh was underway, with a view to effecting repairs to enable it to withstand the level of haulage on this key route.	RP
8. Any Other Business The Chairman took the opportunity to announce that Dick Phillips was officially retiring from the post of NCC Network Manager, and thanked him for his contribution to the Group over the last three and a half years, and particularly for his part in the implementation of an Agreed Routes Map.	

John Paterson went on to announce his resignation as Chairman of the Group. He had held the post for three years, and felt that now an Agreed Routes Map had been agreed, it was time to step down. He suggested that in future both a Chairman and Vice-Chairman should be elected, with the Vice-Chairman succeeding to Chairman every two years. JP stated that he hoped a new Chairman could be elected at the next Group meeting, and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in the taking on the role.

9. **Date of Next Meeting –** to be held on Tuesday, 18th November, at 1.30 p.m. at the offices of Egger (UK) Limited, Hexham

PLEASE NOTE: It is now not possible to hold the meeting on 18th November, and the next meeting has been re-arranged for **Wednesday, 10th December at 1.30 p.m.** at the offices of Egger UK Limited.

Appendix 1 - Funding for Timber Transport Infrastructure in England

(Excerpt from Draft TTF Minute from the meeting held 20th June 2014)

The discussion that followed noted that the Local Enterprise Partnerships tend to focus on urban issues and have limited funding. While this may serve to support manufacturing and services it is unlikely to be easily directed into public rural infrastructure. Similarly the EURDP Farming and Forestry Productivity Plan will focus mostly on forest management and businesses. There may be longer term benefit in linking the regional forestry growth plan to the national and European Forestry Strategy to gain more recognition of the value of rural infrastructure in the European Growth Strategy.

It was established that:

- The Forum and north England interests agree that a timber transport fund is required.
- The focus should be on the north of England where the bulk of the softwood resource is concentrated and the minor road network is extensive and more fragile.

Why do we need a fund?

- Investment in timber transport solutions complements and protects other private and public investment in forestry and timber manufacturing.
- Timber transport improvements will help increase economic use of the resource
- The language of 'pinchpoints' is persuasive illustrating the potential to unlock economic activity by addressing minor constraints.
- The expansion of the forest resource over the last fifty years is a major land use change requiring fit for purpose timber transport solutions for 21st Century needs.
- Forestry transport needs to become seen as normal rural traffic.
- Creating fit for purpose infrastructure will help to reduce the social and environmental impacts of timber transport.
- Co-finance from a timber transport fund will 'lower the bar' for the appraisal of local authority investment in rural roads solutions.
- There is scope to promote innovation in infrastructure and lower impact vehicles
- There is potential to support multi-modality such as the rail haulage from Ribbleshead
- A fund will provide focus and cohesion for the timber transport groups

How might it work?

- The model of a central fund to which timber transport groups or partnerships within timber transport groups would apply is seen as valid.
- The Forestry Commission, a local authority or other public body could hold the fund.
- The governance of the fund needs to ensure there is appropriate representation and have mechanisms to avoid conflict of interest between those holding and bidding for funding. In Scotland this is addressed by an Advisory Panel that makes recommendations on fund allocations.
- Data on forecast timber flows can aid strategic targeting of the fund.

DRAFT MINUTE

It was agreed that

- Representatives from the Forum and north England groups should continue to approach ministers and make the case for a timber transport fund.
- Alistair Speedie, Cripsin Thorn, Barry Rowland, Alan Eves and Roland Stiven will meet with Robert Goodwill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport later in the day to follow up on the letter sent to Dan Rogerson Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management.

Appendix 2: Meeting of Forum and North England Timber Transport group representatives with Robert Goodwill MP

The meeting was held at Dalby Forest Visitor Centre on 20th June 2014 6pm -7pm

Present

- **Robert Goodwill** is Conservative MP for Scarborough and Whitby (since 5 May 2005). He is also Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport with responsibility for (amongst other things) local roads (and maintenance).
- **Alistair M Speedie** is the Director Planning and Environment Services for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Alistair has been chair of the (GB) Timber Transport Forum since 2004 and was a key player in developing and securing the implementation of the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme and Fund in Scotland.
- **Crispin Thorn** is Forestry Commission England's Area Director for Yorkshire and the North East. He represents Forestry Commission England on the GB Timber Transport Group and is also a member of the North East Timber Transport Group and the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Partnership
- **Alan Eves** is the Forest Management Director for the Public Forest Estate in Yorkshire. He is responsible for the strategic planning and overseeing the operational delivery of the work on Forestry Commission managed land in Yorkshire.
- **Barry Rowland** - Executive Director – Place (Northumberland County Council). Barry is the former Chief Executive of Newcastle City Council and as Executive Director Place has the responsibility for the road infrastructure across Northumberland.

Apologies

- **Jeremy Walker** is chair of the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Quality Partnership. He was Regional Director of the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber in 1994, and then Chief Executive of the County Council from 1999 to 2005. He currently chairs a number of bodies including the Slowing the Flow Partnership in Pickering. He is also a member of York University Court.
-

Robert Goodwill MP has recently taken on ministerial responsibility for local roads in England and Wales. He was copied into a letter from the Forum, on the subject of creating a timber transport fund, sent to Dan Rogerson MP the minister with responsibility for forestry. The meeting with Robert Goodwill MP was requested by Jeremy Walker to take advantage of the Forum meeting in the locality.

The aim was to inform the minister of the work of the Timber Transport Forum and Groups and highlight the opportunity to create a timber transport fund in England.

Alan Eves gave a brief introduction to Dalby Forest.

On behalf of the forestry and timber sector, Crispin Thorn presented the main points of the [Roots to Prosperity](#) headline report. This growth strategy has been produced by a partnership of northern England county councils, Forestry Commission England and industry representatives, UKFPA and Confor. This geographically rich document sets out the current and potential contribution the sector can make to jobs and economic growth. Timber

DRAFT MINUTE

processors in the region have already invested substantially in recent years and more than 2500 people are employed in primary processing of British-grown forest products in northern England, increasing market share and saving £1bn from the nation's import bill. The capitalised value of the environmental and social benefits derived from the industry in northern England is estimated at £3.4bn. The opportunities for growth lie particularly in extending active management to the substantial proportion of the resource that is currently under-managed.

Alistair Speedie highlighted the issue of timber traffic on rural roads, the work of the Timber Transport Forum and Groups and the benefits that have been gained from having a timber transport fund in Scotland.

Barry Rowland reflected on the progress being made in addressing timber traffic issues in Northumberland and the clear need for directing investment into Timber Transport solutions involving the minor road network serving concentrations of commercial timber.

The Minister is from a local farming family and was aware of issues surrounding HGVs and rural roads. He welcomed being informed of the economic opportunities arising from the forest industries and the work of the Timber Transport Forum. He noted that he had just allocated additional funds to local authorities for the repair of potholes. He agreed to share the briefing notes we provided on timber transport with his officials in the Department for Transport.

Alistair Speedie offered further support from the Forum as required.



Alistair Speedie, Alan Eves, Crispin Thorn, Robert Goodwill MP, Barry Rowland