

Cumbria & North-East England Timber Transport Group Meeting

AGREED MINUTES

14th January 2022 at 14:00 via Microsoft Teams

Chair: Mike Yerbury

Present (27 people)

Andy Powell, Kerr Timber
Colin Binnie, Forestry Commission
Cameron Smith, Euroforest
Dan Barry, Scottish Woodlands
David Biott, Tilhill
David Stoddart, AW Jenkinson
Helen Scott, SGS Timber
Ian Everard, Forestry Commission
James England, Regional Timber Transport Project Officer
James Harrison-Moore, Tilhill
James Houghton, Cumbria County Council
James Richards, Northumberland County Council
John Tunnicliffe, A W Jenkinson
Jose Linares, Forestry Commission
Keith Haywood, Taylormade Timber
Lynne Ryan, Northumberland County Council
Mark Child, Northumberland County Council
Max McLaughlan, Forestry England
Michael Hall, Scottish Woodlands
Mike Yerbury, Egger UK
Neil Gibson, Forestry England
Paul Boobyer, Timber transport Forum Project Officer
Robert Scott, SGS Timber
Robin McCartney, Northumberland County Council
Tim Barratt, Bidwells
Thomas Coates, Egger UK
Tracy Turner, SGS Timber

Apologies

Rob Lewis, Cumbria County Council; **Jim O'Neill**, Forestry Commission; **Rajmund Zygodlewicz**, A J Scott; **James MacDonald**, Tilhill; **Geordie Nicholson**, A J Scott

Agenda

1. Welcome

Chair Mike Yerbury welcomed all to the meeting. It was noted that Rob Lewis has stepped down from this group and is replaced by James Houghton. Jim O'Neill has also stepped down from his role in the group. His replacement is awaited.

2. Appointment of James England as project officer for the Cumbria & North-East Timber Transport Group (C&NETTG)

Mike Yerbury announced James' appointment as the group's project officer.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4. Actions from previous meeting

Completed actions

- Rob Lewis to set up an email address, specific for timber transport consultations: timbertransport@cumbria.gov.uk. This action has been completed.
- Paul Boobyer to investigate funding opportunities for a project officer. James England has been appointed as project officer for the C&NETTG.
- Mike Yerbury to update Paul Boobyer on the potential forestry innovation centre. This action has been completed.

Paul Boobyer to update the TTF's website regarding the merging of Cumbria and Northumberland timber transport groups. This action has partially been completed. Details for Cumbria and Northumberland groups are now up to date, but the group merger will be reflected when the new TTF website goes live by the end of January.

Outstanding actions

- Robin McCartney to make contact with the Borderland Growth Deal Forum. This action has not been completed.
- James England to share the ash dieback toolkit with members of this group. This action has not been completed.
- Lynn Ryan to locate the form used to inform NCC of planned timber extraction and new planting. Paul Boobyer will send the form to all group members. This action will be completed after a review of the form and reporting process has been carried out by NCC.

New Actions

- James England to circulate a one-page document providing information on resources following Storm Arwen.
- James England to update council staff on dealing with felling plan / forest management plan consultations.

5. Storm Arwen: Extent of the windblow within the region

North Northumberland was badly hit by the storm, as was south Scotland.

There is between 1,000-2,000 hectares of windblow within Forestry England North District and this could be between 800,000-1m m³. Forest Research suggest the split between public/private is 40/60 with greater quantities of windblow in the private sector. The species mix and fragmented location of many private sector coupes may become potential issues for the industry. There is also potential that with some of the fragmented ownership, owners may be unclear on the steps needed in relation to consultation on felling permissions and on road-going haulage.

5a(i). Public sector – FE/FC

FE is in the early stages of surveying the full extent of windblow damage and is still assessing access constraints and contractor capacity. Surveying from a fixed-wing plane will be carried out over the coming weeks with the priority being assessment of safety concerns (powerlines) and areas in which third-party businesses rely on forest access.

Felling licence approval needs to be coordinated for felling of large edge / standing trees. In the Northeast and North Yorkshire, a couple more agency officers will be employed to provide greater capacity to handle any increase in applications. It was noted that while permission is normally required for felling windblown trees, there are some exemptions such as dealing with serious safety issues. Good communication with the relevant FC staff is important before any felling takes place.

It was noted that going forward, the district will use this event as an opportunity to improve species mix and resilience.

5a(ii). Private sector

Significant areas have been damaged but assessing these is time consuming and potentially a serious safety issue. Drone/satellite information is being assessed and this is supported by checking the data on the ground.

It was noted that when current (pre-storm) harvesting contracts end, there is likely to be a transition away from standing trees into dealing with areas affected by windblow.

Contractor resource may be an issue due to timescales, lack of new entrants and obtaining new machinery and timber haulage vehicles.

5b. Market demand

The collective demand from processors in the region is set to increase. There is potential for the quantity of pine to increase and also a similar decrease in the quantity of spruce but this will depend on many market factors.

5b(i) Sawmills

The majority of windblow has affected Spruce and this can remain on the stump for longer periods than Pine without detrimental impact to the quality of the timber. This may result in the Spruce being recovered over a longer time period.

Concern raised about large quantities of Pine being worked over the spring/summer period which could result in blue stain within the roundwood. Sawmills are reluctant to accept large quantities of deliveries of Pine with blue stain as it can impact on the marketing of the sawn timber. If local

processors can't take the timber volume, timber may need to leave the region which could affect pricing and local haulage scenarios.

Many local mills are currently seeing high quantities of Larch being offered, mostly as a result of local outbreaks of *P. ramorum*.

It is thought that a large quantity of the private sector fragmented woodland that has been affected by windblow will be uncertified. Therefore, bringing this to market in a short space of time will likely have an impact on how easy it is for processors to accept this material given that most wood-based materials demand at least 70% FSC certification within the product.

The demand for biomass means species mix is less of a concern.

5c Timber transport considerations

Some windblown areas can only be accessed from weak roads. It was reiterated that there needs to be good communication with Local Authorities.

NCC suggested revising the ARM which is something that the TTG will need to consider. The ARM was generated a number of years ago after careful planning and consideration between members of the group and any changes need to be agreed between both the local authorities and the forestry industry.

6. Timber Transport Forum update

Paul Boobyer provided an update from the Timber Transport Forum. Notes are provided on a separate document.

7. Any other business

No points were raised.

8. Date of next meeting and agenda items for the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on February 15th at 15:00. An invite was sent to members following the meeting held on October 06th.