

Cumbria & North East England Timber Transport Group Meeting - APPROVED MINUTES

21st June 2021 at 10am via Microsoft Teams

Present (20 people)

James England ((JE) Chair & Secretary) South Scotland Timber Transport Officer

Mike Yerbury, Egger

David Stoddart, AW Jenkinsons

Ben Drake, Egger

Marcus Wright, Clark Mctavish

Robin McCartney, Northumberland County Council

Jim O'Neill, Forestry Commission England

Billy Wood, James Jones

Kris Westerby, Northumberland County Council

John Tunnicliffe, AW Jenkinson

Max McLaughlan, Forestry England

Rob Lewis, Cumbria County Council

Lynne Ryan, Northumberland County Council

Neil Gibson, Forestry England

Paul Boobyer, Timber Transport Forum

Cameron Smith, Sheffield & Co. / Euroforest

Michael Hall, Scottish Woodlands

Councillor John Riddle, Northumberland County Council

Michael McNiven, Iggesund

David Conway, Tilhill

Apologies

Colin Binnie, Neville Elstone, Athole McKillop

Agenda

1. Welcome, Introduction & Group Purpose

JE welcomed all members to the meeting and noted that there had been a number of responses from individuals who could not attend. Everyone present gave introductions and JE said it was good to have so many people and showed that there was a keen interest. JE introduced Paul Boobyer, Timber Transport Forums Project Officer, taking over from Roland Stiven. Paul detailed his work and the work of the forum and his contact details are :

Email: paul.boobyer@confor.org.uk

Tel: **07918 875229**

JE gave an outline of the purpose of the group and very much working in partnership, working to best practice and resolving issues openly. The North East England TTG terms of reference are attached.

JE said he would maintain a list of members initially and went on to thank Hazel Newman of Egger for her help with the group over many years as secretary and for sending information out.

ACTION: JE TO MAINTAIN EMAIL LIST INITIALLY FOR THE GROUP

2. Appointing Chair & Secretary Roles – any volunteers

JE highlighted for good operation the group needed a Chair and a Secretary. With Atholl McKillop, ex. Chair, and Hazel Newman, ex. Secretary, now stepping aside, JE asked for any nominations for either role.

Max McLaughlan suggested Mark Child who had recently left Forestry England and taken up a forestry post with Northumberland County Council. Following the meeting, Mike Yerbury also put himself forward should the group be unable to find a suitable candidate.

Ben Drake offered himself in a supporting role, perhaps as a co-Secretary. JE also offered himself as an interim Secretary/co-Secretary.

ACTION: ALL NOMINATE CHAIR & SECRETARY

3. Feedback from the group on joining the groups (Cumbria/North East Eng) together on a permanent basis.

JE highlighted that there were great benefits in bringing the Cumbria and North East England groups together into a combined group as the membership was similar. Cameron Smith said it had been discussed previously but no real decision was made but from his point of view could see merits in it being combined as did Mike Yerbury.

Addendum - to bring this to a conclusion JE suggests that we join the groups together but if there are concerns then please raise them in the next two weeks.

ACTION: CONFIRM MERGER WITH GROUP MEMBERS

4. Timber Transport Forum Update – Revised Code of practice & strapping guidance

JE highlighted that since we last met there had been a number of key timber transport documents, namely:

- 5th Edition of the Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice ([here](#))
- Tread softly ([here](#))
- Brash recovery bulletin ([here](#))
- Timber Transport Survey ([here](#))
- Safe strapping of roundwood ([here](#))
- Transporting timber on public roads ([here](#))

All the documents are available from the Timber Transport Forum website and are included here for information.

5. Borderlands Growth Deal (BDG) – Mike Yerbury

Mike Yerbury provided an update for the group on the topic of the Borderlands Growth Deal. The BGD covers the largest geographical area of any regional growth deal, with a £425 million government investment for the Borderlands area (Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders, Northumberland, Cumbria and City of Carlisle).

Soon after the initial Borderlands Deal idea was announced in 2018, forestry and wood trade body Confor and other businesses within the Borderlands region worked together to get forestry and

wood processing out of the sidelines and right in the centre of the deal. Plans were put together to achieve:

1. Creation of the UK's first Forestry Investment Zone in Northumberland and Cumbria.
2. Introduction of a Strategic Timber Transport Fund in England to match the one in Scotland.
3. Carrying out a future skills audit to ensure the industry has the people it needs for future success.

There are plans to hold a round table meeting in the coming months with parties interested in generating support for a strategic timber transport fund idea and presenting this to the Borderlands Growth Deal Forum.

ACTION: TTG MEMBERS INTERESTED IN BEING INVOLVED TO CONTACT JE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

JE mentioned about the Strategic Timber Transport Fund in Scotland (£7 million) and that it helped Councils strengthen weak public roads where normally it was difficult to justify and typically provided 50% to 70% towards the work costs.

6. Draft timber transport form for the Forest Investment Zone (FIZ) area – Jim O'Neill

Jim O'Neil highlighted the rationale for the form that is attached for comment. Its purpose was to assist with new planting schemes within the Forest Investment Zone and to capture all the information. It has been developed similar to the one used in South Scotland for new planting.

Other members suggested that a similar form had been generated a few years ago to cover all operations, not just new woodland creation. The purpose of the form was to alert either Cumbria or Northumberland County Councils of forthcoming forestry works and to seek initial engagement. All agreed that this was a positive step and the form was to be dug out and circulated.

Also, Lynn Ryan mentioned that Northumberland County Council had set up an email address, specific for timber transport consultations: timbertransport@northumberland.gov.uk

Rob Lewis said that Cumbria will setup timbertransport@cumbria.gov.uk

ACTION: PLEASE FEEDBACK COMMENTS ON FORM & NOTE CONSULTATION EMAIL ADDRESSES

7. Local Timber Transport Issues – eg. Ponteland

- **Ponteland**

Residents in Ponteland, Northumberland have raised an issue with timber transport travelling along an existing Agreed Route. MH suggested that this was primarily used by lorries travelling to/from the Estover biomass plant at Cramlington. RM confirmed that Northumberland County Council are looking at this currently and that they may look to amend the Agreed Routes Map. JE reminded the group that any amendments to the maps needed to be consulted on within the group prior to any changes being made.

JR mentioned that there are emergency Gas Pipe works planned in Ponteland over the coming months. LR suggested that a good website to use to update members of the group on planned network works was <https://one.network>

- **Consultation**

Michael Hall raised the issue that on a couple of occasions recently, a consultation request had been met with a response of survey and cost of damage to be the responsibility of the organisation

commissioning the haulage. This goes against the established protocol of consultation which is there to discuss and jointly agree the most suitable way to move timber from the forest, along the public road network, to the customer. This is reinforced in the Transporting timber on public roads document ([here](#)).

ADDENDUM - For clarity these are the definitions of the different agreed route map categories and the purpose of the partnership is to avoid the need to start charging for repairs as these are public highways open to legal traffic and providing operators follow best practice, in consulting and discussing operations with Councils it should avoid the need to do this.

Agreed Routes

Agreed Routes can be used for timber haulage without restriction (other than as regulated by the Road Traffic Act 1988). "A" roads (e.g. the A6) are assumed to be Agreed Routes unless covered by one of the other TTG classifications (e.g. Consultation Route)

Consultation Routes

Consultation Routes are recognised as being key to timber extraction but are not up to Agreed Route standard. Consultation with the Local Authority is required and it may be necessary to agree limits of timing, allowable tonnage etc. before the route can be used. B roads and minor roads that are not categorised should be assumed to be Consultation Routes unless covered by one of the other classifications (e.g. Severely Restricted Route).

Severely Restricted Routes

Severely Restricted Routes should not normally be used for timber transport in their present condition. These routes are close to being Excluded Routes and consultation with the Local Authority is required to achieve an agreed road and traffic management regime to get the timber out.

Excluded Routes

Excluded Routes should not be used for timber transport in their present condition. These routes are either formally restricted, or are close to being formally restricted, in order to protect the road network from damaging loads. Consultation with the Local Authority is required to explore alternatives.

- **General complaints/correspondence**

RL asked where general complaints/correspondence which relates to issues with timber transport across Cumbria or Northumberland should be sent. JE confirmed that in the first instance it should be sent directly to him by email.

- **Speeding**

RM raised the issue of timber lorries speeding. JE suggested that was more of a perception issue and had supported this on numerous occasions with speed checking haulage through villages. On the vast majority of case, it was cars and vans that were recorded in excess of the local speed limits and not timber transport. However, hauliers need to be aware that given their size that the public can perceive them as travelling at greater speed.

- **Increased public in the forest**

Billy Wood reminded all that there has been an increase in the incidence of the general public visiting forests over the last 12 months and that this can cause issues with obstructing timber transport. Extra vigilance is required ([see FISA documents](#)).

8. Next Meeting

JE thanks everyone for their contribution and suggested meeting again in October 2021.

ACTION: JE TO SEND AROUND A DOODLE POLL WITH SUGGESTED DATES FOR NEXT MEETING.