

## North East England Timber Transport Group

Meeting held at the Offices of Egger (UK) Limited, Hexham  
at 3.30 p.m. on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2016

### Present:

|                                  |                                                       |
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| Athole McKillop, Chairman (AMcK) | Land Factor                                           |
| Max McLaughlan (MMc)             | H&M Operations Manager, Forestry Commission           |
| Robert Mayhew (RM)               | Northumberland National Parks Authority               |
| Robert Scott (RSc)               | SGS Timber Transport                                  |
| James England (JE)               | Timber Transport Officer, Dumfries & Galloway Council |
| George Nicholson (GN)            | A & J Scott Limited                                   |
| Chris Waterfield (CW)            | FC England                                            |
| Ian Everard (IE)                 | FC England                                            |
| Lynne Ryan (LR)                  | Network Manager, Northumberland County Council        |
| Kris Westerby (KW)               | Area Highways Manager, Northumberland County Council  |
| Eddie Addis (EA)                 | Tilhill Forestry                                      |
| Byron Braithwaite (BB)           | Tilhill Forestry                                      |
| Cameron Smith (CS)               | Euroforest Limited                                    |
| Michael Hall (MH)                | Scottish Woodlands Limited                            |
| Andrew Kitching (AK)             | Rural Development Initiatives                         |
| Keith Haywood (KH)               | Taylormade Timber Products Limited                    |
| Tom Coates (TC)                  | Egger Forestry Harvesting                             |
| Hazel Newman (HN), Secretary     | Egger (UK) Limited                                    |

Apologies were received from: Doug Howieson, FC; John Lees, Tilhill Forestry; Ian Robinson, Scottish Woodlands; Crispin Thorn, FC; Roland Stiven, TTF; David Sulman, UKFPA

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### Action

1. Chairman, Athole McKillop welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief update of events since the last Group meeting held in April 2015 (not minuted). The Group had been informed in January 2016 that Andrew Douglas, appointed Secretary in December 2014, had been transferred to another post in Northumberland County Council and was no longer able to carry out the secretarial role. Andrew had carried out a liaison role while in post and had proved a valuable point of contact with members of the forest sector, demonstrating a growing understanding of the industry and attending public meetings where timber transport issues were discussed.

The Chairman had subsequently met with Paul Jones, Acting Director of Local Services, NCC and Ruth Bendell, Infrastructure Manager on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016. It had been a positive meeting in which they confirmed their commitment to the Group and its activities. When asked for a new point of contact within the Council, Ruth Bendell had explained that the post was not funded and that NCC proposed representation at a higher level. In future TTG meetings would be attended by Kris Westerby, Area Highways Manager, and Lynne Ryan, Network Manager. Hazel Newman agreed to resume the role of secretary for the following 12 months.

### **2. Northumberland County Council Update**

Lynne Ryan introduced Kris Westerby and herself to the meeting. LR had previously held responsibility for parking services within the County and was now also responsible for street works, while KW as Area Highways Manager was responsible for the capital delivery of roads and, as such, issues connected with timber transport might involve him in the first instance. LR/KW were keen to understand lines of communication within the industry, and how the planning/felling license process could best be accessed for information. LR commented that since the departure of Andrew Douglas, NCC were

| <u>No.</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <u>Action</u>                     |
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| <p>not receiving information regarding timber transport issues, some of which in the recent past had been resolved by the implementation of Timber Transport Management Plans. The Chairman reiterated that a single point of contact would be the most useful means of communication with NCC. However, LR confirmed that this could not be the case, and that they were looking to institute a generic e-mail address, from which issues could be directed to the most appropriate Council personnel. LR to advise the Group of the e-mail address when it is set up.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | LR                                |
| <p>It was agreed that a small group of TTG representatives would meet with LR &amp; KW to explain planning/felling license procedures (the role of Local Authorities as statutory consultees), responsibilities, the situation in Scotland in terms of STTS funding, timber transport management plans, forest exit point study etc.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 23.05.16<br>(AMcK, JE,HN, LR, KW) |
| <p>Kris Westerby advised the meeting that there would be six week road closure at Hexham railway bridge as well as narrowing of Rotary Way (the main route into Hexham off the A69), however, it was thought that timber transport going into Egger would not be affected.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                   |
| <p><b>3. Terms of Reference</b><br/>Members were asked to review the existing TOR and bring any suggested changes back to the next meeting.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                   |
| <p><b>4. Timber Transport Forum Update</b></p> <p><b>Loading Timber from Roadside Forests</b> – James England reported that the Timber Transport Forum had recently published a good practice guide in response to increasing incidence of bad practice. JE had put together the document and it covered such issues as legislation, providing suitable stacking areas on or close to public roads, gaining necessary permissions and managing road traffic. If stacking or loading at roadside was unavoidable, JE emphasised the need to contact the Local Authority to explore the best way to manage the situation in such ways as temporary access or road closure. Mud on roads caused by timber vehicles tracking it out of the forests was also a serious safety issue.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                   |
| <p>At a previous meeting the implementation of a permit system had been discussed, but Lynne Ryan stated that she had developed a Timber Transport Management Plan in which there was a section on stacking and loading on the public highway. This document detailed restrictions, conditions, signage etc. which should be agreed between the harvesting company, hauliers, internal Council departments and parish councils. LR emphasised that communication with NCC should take place well ahead of any proposed extraction. AMcK pointed out that this demonstrated the need for a point of contact within NCC who was knowledgeable about the harvesting/extraction process in particular and the industry in general. It was important that there was consistency in the way in which NCC dealt with varying operations. Experience in other regions had shown that addressing issues before the event often resulted in money being saved in the long run. LR asked if there might be funding available to contribute to the funding of such a post. This was not currently clear, however, LR agreed that she would look into putting together a business case to take the matter forward.</p> | LR                                |
| <p>It was suggested that the Forestry Commission might be able to incorporate reference to contacting the Highways Authority prior to extraction into felling licence documentation. However, Chris Waterfield pointed out that documentation was on a national template, and could not be adapted locally. Information on the felling licence was based on the requirements of the Forestry Act.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                   |
| <p>JE pointed out that the main theme of the Timber Transport Forum Conference, held in March, had been engagement between timber transport and communities. Presentations given at the Conference can be accessed from the following link:<br/><a href="http://timbertransportforum.org.uk/knowledge-base/reference/conferences">http://timbertransportforum.org.uk/knowledge-base/reference/conferences</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                   |

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| 5.  | <p><b>Roots to Prosperity</b></p> <p>The objective of this initiative is to unlock the potential of the forestry and forest products sector across the north of England in order to maximise its economic potential. Funded jointly by the Forestry Commission, Northumberland, Cumbria, Durham and North Yorkshire Councils, and industry associations Confor and UKFPA. AMcK reported that there was currently a pilot project in North Yorkshire, led by the Forestry Commission, to identify appropriate areas for woodland creation by undertaking opportunity mapping in Northumberland, Cumbria, Durham, North Yorkshire and Lancashire.</p> <p>It was unclear whether R2P could be a source of funding for a timber transport liaison post at NCC, but AMcK pointed out that if there was money available it might be possible for the Timber Transport Group to access it on behalf of the Council. AMcK to follow up with Oliver Combe, who had written to FC regarding the status of the initiative.</p> <p>Another worthwhile exercise would be the identification of forest exit points and potential volumes of timber coming out of woodlands in the next 5-10 year, similar to that carried out in Scotland. Ian Everard commented that 10 year management plans noted exit points, but it was agreed that more concise information was required for the purpose of targeted highways maintenance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | AMcK   |
| 6.  | <p><b>North East England Agreed Route Map</b></p> <p><b>Junctions on the B6318 with the C307 (at the Sill Development), U7055 (to Vindolanda) and U7038 (to Edges Green via Steel Rigg)</b></p> <p>Robert Mayhew, National Parks Authority, had requested that this matter be put onto the Agenda. He explained the background to the Sill development, situated on the south side of the Military Road (B6318) at the junction with the C307, on the site of the Once Brewed Visitor Centre and YHA hostel. The new development will consist of a visitor centre, café, restaurant, offices and a retail outlet, as well as car parking for the expected 150,000 visitors per year (increased from 60-80,000 p.a.).</p> <p>The development was due to open in the Summer of 2017, and the National Parks Authority had health and safety concerns regarding the number of timber vehicles using the junctions and roads in question, in light of the increased visitor numbers, including cyclists and walkers. RM requested that these roads should be re-categorised on the ARM as either 'consultation' or 'excluded' routes.</p> <p>Discussion followed about current use of these roads and junctions. Robert Scott pointed out that the C307 was well established as the main timber haulage route onto the A69 for timber coming out of Kielder heading to processors in the East. The road is good and the junction onto the A69 is adequately wide and has good sightlines in both directions. However, the road past Steel Rigg, and the one past Vindolanda was rarely if ever used by timber vehicles. Members were concerned at the lack of a viable alternative to the C307 to reach the A69.</p> <p>It was pointed out that existing use of the roads should have been taken into account before planning permission was granted for the Sill, and it was noted that because the development was within the National Park, that permission was based largely on the recommendation of the NPA. Members questioned the planning process, and RM agreed to obtain information of the process followed. JE commented that in most similar cases a road safety audit would be carried out, and a package of measures adopted to address issues arising. KW commented that NCC were imposing a 40mph speed limit either side of the Sill with appropriate signage, backed up by speed cameras. It would be useful to gain rough numbers of timber vehicle movements.</p> <p>Due to the potentially serious impact on timber movements of any restrictions imposed at the Sill junction in particular, it was agreed that a steering group would meet separately to discuss the matter in more detail. This meeting to be attended by Robert Mayhew (NPA), Athole McKillop, Max McLaughlan (FC), Robert Scott (timber haulage),</p> | RM     |

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|                   | <p>Tom Coates (Egger), Kris Westerby (NCC) and Hazel Newman (Secretary). It was agreed to hold the meeting in June at a date to be arranged. The outcome of this meeting to be reported back to next full meeting of the Group.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | AMcK                 |
|                   | <p><b>Potential extraction of timber from Highgreen Estate, Tarsset, 2017</b></p> <p>David Robson advised Members that as part of the management plan, it was intended to harvest approximately 2,500 tonnes of timber on the Highgreen Estate between 2017 and 2021. Extraction would be via a consultation route, and DR was aware of the sensitive nature of operations in the Gleedlee area. To date he had a positive response from local residents. LR stated that there had been a Timber Traffic Management Plan in place for Gleedlee which could be adapted for Highgreen. KW advised that DR write to the NCC Highways Department well in advance of operations commencing.</p> | DR                   |
|                   | <p>Michael Hall (Scottish Woodlands) commented that he had been in communications with Andrew Douglas regarding one of their harvesting operations at Greenhaugh. The only option for extraction was via an excluded route. He had consulted with local residents and had a positive response, but was waiting for a reply from NCC. MH to e-mail KW with details of the proposed route, but in future this type of query should be sent to the generic e-mail which was being set up.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | MH                   |
|                   | <p><b>Agreed Routes Map – Update and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>JE stated that he was prepared to continue to update the ARM on behalf of the North East Group. It was agreed that NCC would advise JE of any Timber Transport Management Plans as and when implemented, for inclusion on the map.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | JE/NCC               |
| 7.                | <p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next full meeting of the Group will be held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 at 9.30 a.m. at the Egger offices at Hexham.</p> <p>A meeting of The Sill Steering Group will be held on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                      |