

Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 13 March 2019

Location: Forestry Commission Scotland, Grampian Conservancy, Portsoy Road, Huntly, AB54 4SJ

Present:

Will Anderson – Chair (WA)	Lee Grigor – James Jones (LG)
Mark Atherton – Moray Council (MA)	Andrew Nicol – DWP (AN)
Paul Barron – Moray Council (PB)	Roland Stiven – TTF (RS)
Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)	Frank Tomlinson – Tilhill (FT)
Steve Conolly – Cawdor Forestry (SC)	Harry J Wilson – RTS (HJW)
Heather Coyle – Forestry Commission Scotland (HC)	Luke Wilson – Scottish Woodlands (LW)
Angela Funk – Aberdeenshire Council (AF)	Alastair Young – FES (AY)
Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)	

Apologies

Jim Cargill – Nestrans	Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland
Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands	Graeme Ralph – Euroforest
Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council	Rajmund Zygodlewicz – Egger Forestry

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
7. (19/11/15)	Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS	IC/DM
7. (17/03/16)	GTTG to discuss/agree requested change to ARM classification of U144H	All
6. (14/07/16)	Pull together events programme for discussion with members	RS/CG/LAs
3. (12/12/16)	Discuss potential planning permission conditions for road improvements at Conyachie Road end	DM
9. (12/12/16)	Confirm Prior Notification situation with Confor	RS
3. (16/03/17)	Discuss potential for STTS application for an in-forest route through the Gownie road forest complex	NC/CG
6. (15/11/17)	Discuss STTS eligibility/Prior Notification requirements with RS	CG/RS
3.	Discuss STTS proposals with Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils	CG
3.	GTTG members to discuss STTS bids for submission by 23 April 2019	All
3.	Circulate details of individual match funding contributions for consideration	RS
3.	Notify RS of match funding availability for 2019/20 RTTAS post	All
5.	Discuss development of a GTTG action plan	WA/CG/All

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA opened a round table introduction and welcomed those for whom this was their first GTTG meeting.

2. Notes of last meeting on 21 November 2018 & matters arising

Action table below has been amended to reflect current status (those now completed have been shaded; carried forward actions added to current action table above.

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3. (15/11/17)	Contact industry representatives for production data and priority roads	CG/industry
6. (15/11/17)	Discuss STTS eligibility/Prior Notification requirements with RS	CG/RS
3. (21/11/18)	GTTG members to come forward with potential STTS projects	All
4. (21/11/18)	Circulate the draft RTTG Governance document for comment	CG/All
4. (21/11/18)	Circulate the draft Timber Transport Management Protocols for comment	CG/All
6. (21/11/18)	Review ARM status of the Duthil-Glenferness road	All

- **Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS:** *To be discussed at RTTG Project Officers' meeting on 27 June 2019 in connection with new felling permission regulations*
- **Review ARM status of the Duthil-Glenferness road:** Typo in spelling of Duthil corrected and *query forwarded to HTTG as within THC area*
- **3.2 Emerging Plans for 2018/19** – Reference to A95 corrected to A97

3. Strategic Timber Transport Scheme update and future GTTG projects

RS reported that the current year's budget had been committed and confirmed that funding for 2019/2020 has now been announced. £7M will be available for the STTF as a whole with £1M being allocated to Timberlink and £6M for STTS. A deadline of 23 April 2019 has been set and contract news expected by the end of May 2019. As in the current financial year, up to a 70% intervention can be requested for B, C and unclassified roads and up to 50% for A-class roads. Previously, the intention had been to distribute funding across Scotland but this year, there will be a focus on ranking projects on outcomes/delivering benefits.

3.1 Proposals for 2019-20 projects

- 3.1.1** Aberdeenshire: AF advised that a bid is likely to include Phase 2 works on schemes included in the 2018/19 contracts and schemes from last year's bid that cover new areas and confirmed that a list of proposed roads would be circulated for review/comment. CG asked if roads serving Grampian Forest areas will be included. AF requested industry input to highlight who owns what/volumes etc.. HC has been liaising with CG to provide information.

- 3.1.2** Moray: Proposals are likely to include surface dressing of 2018/19 schemes, Phase 2 works on the B9009, strengthening on the C55H, additional passing places on the C7 and recycling works on the C11. IC asked if applicants should prioritise roads; RS confirmed that this should be done within the application. IC also asked if industry has any specific comments. LG advised that lorries are carrying greater volumes and are continually trying to avoid potholes and edge overrun. AF highlighted that edge damage is a concern and that timescales limit what work can be carried out. WA queried the situation with overhanging vegetation and whether it should be the responsibility of owner or Council; IC/PB confirmed it would depend on where the vegetation originated (i.e. within the road/verge (Council) or outwith (landowner)). RS and CG updated members on system in HTTG where private match funding is provided, particularly if the benefits of improvements are greater for private owners than for the wider public. PB asked what sort of contributions are provided; RS advised that these can be in the region of £10-15K. WA queried whether land gifted for passing places could still count as an in-kind contribution; RS advised that only if a tangible value can be demonstrated. AN asked if this would include land valued by a District Valuer; RS confirmed it would. AN highlighted that a lot of roads could benefit from improvement but just serve one forest owner – IC described how the Gownie Road would fall into that category. RS suggested that where forest accesses were required, these should be tied in with STTS applications. CG to discuss proposals further with the Council.
- 3.1.3** Regional Timber Transport Group Advisory Service: CG left the meeting whilst these discussions were held. RS raised two queries with GTTG members; 1 - would they like to maintain the current service at 3 days/week (as discussed previously, the service had been based on 2.5 days/week until this current year when an additional 0.5 days/week was added but, as it primarily involved carrying out STTS claims inspections, was covered by STTS funding) and 2 – if they wished to continue the service at 3 days/week, would members be happy to increase their level of contribution to cover this additional time and the first increase in daily rate for the service. Members agreed that in principle, they would like to maintain the service at 3 days/week and would be willing to consider increasing their level of contributions to cover this and a rate rise. Before any match funding increases could be confirmed however, RS was asked to provide members with details of the proposed increase in individual contributions, invite comment and seek agreement or otherwise.
- 3.1.4** Other: Nothing to report

3.2 Update on Opportunities for future investment in transport infrastructure

3.2.1 Opportunities for modal shift in NE Scotland

Following the work that was carried out to identify future investment in transport infrastructure, members considered whether there were opportunities for modal shift (to rail or sea) to/from NE Scotland. Members discussed the significant level of investment required for short hauls compared to existing road haulage costs, current train scheduling/limited capacity on the network, prioritisation of loads at ports, current levels of haulage by sea for specific routes and changing product demands and markets and concluded that whilst modal shift shouldn't be ruled out, there are limited opportunities in the north east at present.

4. Under the spotlight

4.1 New TTF publication - Guidance on Consultation and Engagement

RS advised members of the new TTF document, highlighting that it was based on the GTTG's Timber Transport Management Protocol and that its purpose is to raise awareness of the need for/benefits of consultation and make reference to recent work carried out by the Scottish Land Commission. The document is currently in a final draft stage and will be discussed/approved at the TTF meeting at the beginning of April 2019.

4.2 Improving our record of turning guidance into reality

Connected to guidance on consultation, members discussed the imminent changes to felling permission procedures and noted that these **may** make greater reference to consultation for timber haulage. RS/CG to check the position and update the GTTG accordingly. Members agreed that there needs to be a consistent approach taken in terms of who should consult and when and what information should be provided during the felling permission/LTFP approval process and at subsequent tendering/harvesting stages.

At an operational level, SC asked if there is a way of monitoring the use of CTi/maxi tyres etc. if these have been specified in haulage contracts. LG explained that there are technologies which can record whether such systems are being utilised but that their adoption is driven by cost and customer demand/stakeholder requirements.

5. GTTG members updates

5.1 Round table updates and topical discussion

5.1.1 Member updates

- IC advised members that he would be taking early retirement w.e.f. tomorrow. WA expressed his sincere thanks to Ian for all the work he has done for the GTTG, the strong support he has shown to the group and the industry and the time he has spent developing and delivering STTS projects. Other members seconded WA's thanks and all wished IC a very happy retirement.
- AY highlighted that they are coming across instances of out of date first aid kits and that they will therefore be raising awareness amongst those operating on FES ground of the requirement to hold a first aid + F certificate and undergo 3-yearly refresher training. The need for up to date equipment in pollution kits will also be raised.
- RS thanked members for their feedback on Regional Timber Transport Group governance (minutes from meeting on 21 November refer) as this will help in the preparation of a strategic plan for the TTF. RS explained that the TTF have been discussing if regional groups could/should develop action plans to show how improvements for timber transport could also benefit the local economy. Subject to be discussed at a future GTTG meeting.
- PB and AF highlighted increasing concerns regarding the condition of some bridges and structures and whether these could be eligible for STTS support (PB highlighted that a 26 tonne limit is being placed on Arthur's Bridge on the B9103 just south of Lossiemouth). RS confirmed that they could be eligible but that budgets are such that support would be limited. CG advised that she has had preliminary discussions with Aberdeenshire Councils bridges team and suggested that a PPG application may be appropriate so that potential works and priorities could be considered.

5.1.2 Timber Transport Forum Conference 2020 (location and themes)

RS advised that potential themes for the conference are to be discussed at Timber Transport Forum at beginning of April but that its location is likely to be in north England/south Scotland.

5.1.3 FISA Summit and Haulage Working Group (activities)

RS updated members on the recently produced Forest Research wire watchers report (see attached). Members discussed whether this could be used in harvesting machines too; AY confirmed that it is already used in the construction industry. RS also highlighted current discussions on load security and strapping, confirming that there hasn't been a recent change to the rules but that the TTF will be asking FISA to review current guidelines and recommend changes, if appropriate. LG advised that the security of a load is the responsibility of the driver, that strapping requirements will depend on the load and that common sense needs to prevail.

5.1.4 Skills Development Scotland (timber haulage research)

CG/RS informed members of a haulage group within Skills Development Scotland which is currently looking at skills gaps/shortages. The group is keen to hear views from the timber haulage sector so the TTF is to circulate a short survey to collect views.

5.1.5 Air Quality Action Plans (point of information)

CG highlighted that the S&TTTG have recently submitted a response to an Air Quality Action Plan consultation in the Crieff area and that whilst there are currently no such areas in the GTTG area, as /when these arise, it would be useful for the GTTG to provide comment if these will impact on future haulage operations

6. Date of next meeting/s

6.1 Wednesday 17 July 2019 - provisional