**Attendees**

Gary Barker

Kieran Barry

Andy Brookes

Neil Caldwell

Phil Cockbain

Dylan Draper

Niki Egerton

Nick Graham

Mike Gerrard

Tony Greenhalgh

Chris Goulden

Steven Heately Hughes

Stewart Hepworth

Christopher Higgingbottom

Craig Kenyon

David Lea

Carl Milton

Steve O’Connor

David Owen

Darren Parry

Syd Perkinsons

Jayne Pilkington

Patrick Riley

David Rooney

Jennifer Taylor

Andrew Woolfall

**Apologies**

Kerrie Salisbury, Dave Eccles, Chris Brown, Mathew Smith, John Thomas

**FTA Staff:** Malcolm Bingham, James Firth,

1. **Introduction and welcome**

An introduction and welcome were given to all members attending the meeting.

A presentation was made on a project to encourage more freight through the port of Liverpool (project Prospice 21). Members can find more information at <http://www.prospice21.co.uk/about/>

Members also discussed Highways England’s proposals to improve the access to the port of Liverpool by building a new link to the port through Rimrose Valley. It was agreed that the alternative route to enhance the existing route would still create issues for freight on the existing A5036 and it appears sensible to support the Rimrose Valley route which will have les junctions and not intrude into a e residential area.

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as true and accurate with no matters arising.

1. **Election of Regional Freight Council chair and UK Councils reps.**

Members agree that the following are elected to ports within this Council for the next year

UK Council Reps David Owen, Christopher Higgingbottom, Carl Milton and John Thomas for the coming year and to elect Andrew Woolfall as a deputy UK Council Rep.

It was noted that we could elect chair and vice chair at the this or next meeting and as there were some absentees due to the weather conditions it was decided to determine those post at the next election.

1. **Issues arising from UK Council on 8th November 2018, and attendance at UK Council 8 November 2018**

Members were briefed on the discussion items at National Council on 9th May Including Financial Standing for Restricted Operators and the HM Treasury’s Red Diesel Review.

It was confirmed that David Owen, Christopher Higgingbottom, Carl Milton and Andrew Woolfall will attend the next UK Council meeting taking place on 7th February 2019.

1. **Secretary’s report**

Members were updated on issues including FORS Review; London Direct Vision Standard; Independent Testing; Availability of HGV Annual Tests; Immigration White Paper and Labour Shortage Categories; Abnormal Loads.

Members discussed their concerns on the difficulties faced with the long period of roadworks on the Strategic Road network in the North West of England. It was felt that Highways England need to look to see what they could do to improve the situation for road users in roadworks. It was recognised that reliable data was important for operators both on roadworks programmes and in the management of incidents within roadworks.

One option that could be looked at was to look for innovation in variable speed limits in roadworks which could sensible select speed relevant to off peak time and when works are not taking place. It was recognised that a lane had been opened on the M6 works recent together with an increase to 60 mph. However, it was felt that speed had been retained at 50 mph where road equipment testing was being carried out and that seem to take a long time to complete.

Members also recognised the need to respect road workers within the work and extend that respect to recovery operators noting that there is a campaign “Slow Down or Move Over UK” working to build a culture of awareness for all road users. More information can be found at <https://www.slowdownmoveover.uk/our_mission/>

1. **Vehicle Operators Licensing – Priorities for Development**

Members discussed what additional features or processes would members like to see added to Vehicle Operator Licensing (VOL) online system.

Member felt that it would be useful to have the opportunity to reporting convictions and material change within the system rather than the present system of communicating by letter.

It was felt that it would be useful to compare to Information Commissioners Office and Health and Safety Executive for notification processes.

1. **Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Roads and Zones**

Increasingly local authorities are bringing in small scale Ultra-Low Emission vehicle and zero emission requirements often with differing standards and hours of operation.

While there were no areas know in the North West members felt that the approach taken by FTA was supported.

There are concerns about grid capacity with a major shift to electric vans and the level of investment that might be needed.

One member had tried a hydrogen van but found that they had little power on uphill gradients and the drivers moved to revert to petrol.

1. **Coastal Shipping – How to grow the market**

Members were briefed on the decline of coastal shipping within the UK and the Associations proposal to develop a new policy study to influence the DfT’s Maritime 2050 agenda.

Members reflected concerns about adequate facilities to load and unload on both ends of the journey and that all modes need to economically viable.

It was recognised that timber is still a commodity that uses coastal shipping.

1. **Road haulage and Container Ports – Working to resolve congestion**

Members were briefed on the reported congestion problems at some container ports.

There were no issues reported in the North West area and it was felt that previous problems at the Port of Liverpool had been dealt with.

1. **Brexit Preparedness**

With the Brexit dealing approaching members were asked about contingency plan and what further advice members need to help their activities and services.

There was a belief that some stock piling was taking place as a constituency against port delays. The main issue is with the customers of hauliers and there are some talks between them, but it is difficult to be sure about the scale.

It was recognised there is no solution for fresh foods and that is a major concern for retailers going forward.

1. **Regional items**

Member were made aware of Transport for Greater Manchester’s Clean Air Plan and the likelihood of a charging Clean Air Zone being set up in the Greater Manchester area. It was noted that the process was now in place to create a discussion on the issue which will be followed by a statutory consultation. Members will be informed when that is to take place later this year and how to respond to the consultation.

1. **Any other issues raised by Members**

FTA reported that DVSA is no longer using chip and pin to collect penalties at the roadside.

The Association is looking further into this move and members were concerned that it could raise administration difficulties for operators if they are forced make payments for driver offences.

Penalties for agency drivers can be problematic and like PCN’s issued for agency drivers they can often be overlooked resulting in higher penalties as the issue was not settled quickly.

**The next meeting of the regional council will be held on Wednesday 17th April 2019 at Wrightington Hotel**