**Attendees**

Simon Allitt

Gary Bennet

Janice Dawson

Chris McKenzie

Jeff Ritchie

John Thirling

Alex Tuner

Mick Watson

Kate Wilson

**Apologies**

Chris Prince, Thomas Reay, Paul Russell

**FTA Staff:** Malcolm Bingham, James Firth, Andy Jones, Jim Mower

1. **Introduction and welcome**

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

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

Chair Jeff Richie

Deputy Chair Mick Watson

UK Council Reps Jeff Richie and |mick Watson with Kate Wilson elected as deputy rep.

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 Jeff Ritchie and Mick Watson 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.

A query was raised on why there are now free briefings and there was some concern on the association move to using Webinars. For some getting away from the working place for briefings has a benefit while taking part in webinars can be disturbed if seating at a work desk. Free briefings also created more time for networking.

A point was also made about booking Mot which are now difficult to do over a 12-month period and how does that match the requirement that DVSA have of a planned maintenance schedule.

It was noted that the Traffic Commissioners are aware that DVSA cannot currently give assurances that they will have testers at ATFs for the full year but are working on the issue currently.

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.

It was felt that a helpful step would be to introduce a Licence-specific log in where individual can have log in for a specified traffic area licence without being given access to other traffic areas held on a license. This is a move which could help with ensuring employees only have the information that they need for their role and limit background data being misused by staff who leave through a disciplinary process.

Make it possible to transfer of Transport Manger data for those who have not gone through TM1 process since VOL started.

The system should include a correspondence handling process – if you “write to Traffic Commission or the Office of the Traffic Commissioner you do it through VOL and client can see that their correspondence is on the system.

Stop sending emails requiring a response which say, “DO NOT REPLY”.

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.

Members generally agreed with the Association approach that while we support the need to improve air quality industry needs to be consulted about the development of these area at an early stage and we require more strategic approach by central Government to avoid misaligned schemes.

Members where not aware of any schemes in the North East of England.

They were however concerned that manufacturers are giving mixed options as solutions with cost that are difficult to deal with on the whole life of the vehicle.

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 recognised that there are coastal services to Tees Port and Grangemouth and but felt that for the members present the main issue is with supplier initiatives that would further promote short sea services.

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

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

It was not felt that there were any issues in the North East but felt that collections and reruns often must be around the customers resources, and it may be difficult to change distribution times.

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.

Members felt that even at this stage, too many unknowns to make effective contingency plans. For the member present the suppliers has the task of getting the goods to the operator and many third-party suppliers are not sure what they will have to do.

Members were aware of the ECMT permit availability and the work that FTA has been involved in to extend the deadline for applications. They were however concerned on the availability of skills going forward.

1. **Regional items**

Members were briefed on the upcoming consultation on a Clean Air Zone in Newcastle, Gateshead and North Tyneside. They were also briefed on discussion between FTA and Tees Valley and it was decided to invite the freight officer in the Combined Authority to the next meeting of the Freight Council.

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

An issue was raised about an item discussed at the utilities’ group which suggested that when drivers are subject to disciplinary action it should be reported to the Traffic Commissioner.

It was noted that this is a routine issue within the PSV industry and while there is not specific requirement within the HGV sector it would be advisable to report significant issue to demonstrate what the operator has done.

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.

**The next meeting of the regional council will be held on Wednesday 3rd April 2019 at Ramside Hall.**