

East of England Freight Council minutes

Thursday 5 October 2023

09:30 – 13:00

Bedford Lodge Hotel, Bury Road, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7BX

INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was chaired by John Burbridge from Turners (Soham) Ltd.
- The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
- Members were reminded by the Secretary about the competition law compliance guidance and referred members to the full details on page 5 of the Policy Report.

Report back from the Modal Councils

- Members received a report back from Road, Rail, Air, Water and Shippers Councils.

Report back from the Working Groups

- Members received a report back from the Warehouse, Van Policy, Environment Working Groups and Engineering Forum.

Secretary's Report

- Members were updated on other issues not on the main agenda including: Logistics UK's Autumn Statement, Direct Vision Standard, Longer Semi-Trailers and the delays to the Smart Tachograph 2.
- With regard to Smart Tachograph 2, members confirmed that they are now downloading on a daily basis to deal with the amount of infringements that are showing up. Members confirmed that they have raised this issue with Logistics UK, and that DVSA are aware and have advised operators to ensure that they maintain a paper trail.

REGIONAL ITEMS

- Ellis Shelton updated members on Cambridge City Council abandoning its plans to impose a congestion fee in the city. Proposals were in the works to charge £5 for cars, £10 for vans and £50 for HGVs per day to enter or exit the 'Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone'. However, the proposals failed to gain widespread support in the city, with 58% of those who responded to a consultation rejecting the charge.
- Ellis informed members that the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) had been in contact and wished to speak about future plans. The Council will be updated as and when this meeting takes place.

AGENDA ITEMS

A1 Windsor Framework & Border Target Operating Model

- Natalie Chapman introduced and gave an overview of the 'Windsor Framework & Border Target Operating Model' agenda item. Natalie stated that the Windsor Framework is an international agreement between the UK and EU on the movement of goods from GB to Northern Ireland (NI) via a 'Green Lane' and 'Red Lane' to protect both the UK internal market and EU single market.
- Members complained that insufficient information is being supplied and that various retailers are interpreting the regulations differently. Alongside this, members felt that many merchants relied on transportation firms to solve their problems, but that they also need to look within their own companies to obtain the data required for processing and labelling.

EXTERNAL PRESENTATION

- Helen Fallon, Principal Lead – National Networks and Freight, from England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) – a Subregional Transport Body stretching from Swindon to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire – briefed members of the role of the body, how it works with other STBs and sought feedback on their development of a ‘Freight and Logistics Action Plan’.
- Members expressed worries on industry expectations for achieving Net Zero, considering the unpredictability of future technological advancements. According to Helen, EEH's view their job as facilitating and supplying infrastructure for fuelling and charging, but they require clarification from the Government about the specific technology involved.
- As well, members raised concerns around 'Lorry Routing'. It was felt that a joined-up approach across the region and the UK was needed. Individual counties have lorry route maps which often don't match up with their neighbouring boroughs.
- Helen’s contact details have been sent out to the Council should members wish to contact her.

A2 Parking Restrictions

- Members talked about their experiences with the new parking regulations. Members mentioned that there had been several limitations with new housing projects for a long time, including the inability of vans to park on driveways or adjacent roads.
- The security of vehicles and equipment may be jeopardised by these limitations, but members said that, in cases where it was possible, drivers taking their vehicles home increased productivity — particularly for those who are 'on call'. The 'Working Time Directive' was also affected if drivers had to go to a central hub prior to beginning a shift. It was more environmentally friendly to work from home as it cut down on pollutants and travel distance.
- Members thought Logistics UK ought to highlight the function of vans and their economic significance, as well as the idea that drivers ought to be permitted to drive their work vehicles home.

A3 Statutory Role for Fleet Engineers

- The Operator Licencing regime's legislative requirements for the function of Fleet Engineer were deliberated by members, who also took into consideration the recommendations put together by Logistics UK's Engineering Forum members.
- On the question of whether the position of Fleet Engineer should become statutory, there was no agreement. Many concurred that opposing suggested cost-cutting methods that would jeopardise safety and compliance required an engineering background. Regarding the extra expenses that this would put on businesses, several members expressed concerns. However, everyone was in agreement that the size of the business would be the determining factor. Fleet Engineers function as internal auditors for larger fleets. A definition of the position of fleet engineer would thus be helpful.
- The members concurred that the industry has made significant progress in educating directors about their responsibilities under Operator Licencing and that Transport Managers have the last say on matters. The function of the Transport Manager may become less significant as a result of this. However, Fleet Engineers should, nevertheless, possess the necessary qualifications as Transport Managers are under an obligation to identify and manage their own training. Thus, if there is a lack of knowledge, it is the responsibility of the Transport Manager to rectify this.

A4 Schengen Immigration Restrictions

- No members present were affected as none traded in the European Union. Or, had operators operating in the European Union.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- On DVS, concerns were raised about the cost and lack of detail about the equipment required to comply with the progressive safe system ahead of phase 2 of DVS in October 2024.

- Attendance was confirmed for UK Road Council on 9 November.

ATTENDEES

Chairman

John Burbridge Turners (Soham) Ltd

Members

Kelly White Truck (UK) Limited
Ashley Holland Freshlinc Ltd
Ryan Clay SugaRich
Gary Austin Maritime Transport Ltd
Chris Francis Turners (Soham) Ltd
Richard Pelly Pellys Transport & Regulatory Services Ltd
Lara Drury West Suffolk Council
Karen Fox European Metal Recycling Group
Andy Belcher For Farmers UK Ltd
David Brown MRCT Ltd

Guests

Helen Fallon England's Economic Heartland

Staff

Natalie Chapman Head of Public Affairs
Ellis Shelton Policy Advisor