

East of England Freight Council minutes

Thursday 25 January 2024
09:30 – 12:00
Delta Hotels by Marriott Huntingdon, PE29 6FL

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 and Water 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 submission to the Treasury in response to the Budget being announced, Direct Vision Standard, Driver CPC and MOT Testing for Earned Recognition Operators.

REGIONAL ITEMS

- Ellis Shelton updated members on their attendance at the Greater South East Freight Forum's maiden meeting. England's Economic Heartland, Transport East, and Transport for the South East – the three sub-regional transport organisations (STBs) responsible for the greater South East of England – highlighted the growing cooperation between the STBs, public sector entities, and the freight and logistics sector. In order to oversee upcoming sessions, the STBs have established a Wider South East Freight and Logistics Forum.
- Ellis Shelton updated members that Logistics UK, amongst other organisations, contributed to a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper, urging the progress of Ely Junction. Ely will enable improved frequencies of passenger services between economic hubs in the East of England, while unlocking the potential for passenger service integration when East West Rail connects to Cambridge in the early 2030s.

AGENDA ITEMS

A1 Election Priorities for Nations and Regions

1). Boosting productivity and growth/safety and compliance:

- What support do members receive from their devolved government, region/combined authority or local authority that helps them grow and develop their businesses, and what changes should there be?
- What are the main restrictions on logistics in the region and what changes should be made?
- Members commented that they receive little to no support from local government/authorities. They advised that this had always been the case.

- Concerning restrictions, members expressed their discontent towards the planning system. Members complained about developers building residential areas next to/near logistics sites/hubs. Then, as these areas are occupied, residents complain about the noise levels of these logistics sites/hubs, as HGVs/LGVs are operational within a close vicinity. As well, members also highlighted the imperative to improve night-time running for HGVs. There are frequent problems with entering urban cities, resulting in the inability to deliver at night.

2). Innovative and integrated infrastructure:

- What are the priorities for transport infrastructure upgrades in the region?
- Are there any key roads in the region that are particularly in need of intensive repair and maintenance?
- Members complained of the A11. They noted that it had been repaired, however, repaired to a very poor quality.
- Members noted that continued investment in road infrastructure will be needed, as the surface of the roads as a whole is not good enough. Potholes were stressed as a cause for concern. They felt that the playing field should be levelled by ensuring a base level of quality on all roads.

3). Skills partnership to support a thriving sector:

- Does the devolved government/region play a positive role in ensuring there is a strong pipeline of talent to draw from? What changes should there be?
- Members felt that there is no strong pipeline of talent and that Local Councils need to get on board to support the cause. Members felt that awareness of career prospects within the sector is very low amongst young people. As an industry, they want us to sell these career prospects to young people better.

4). Safety and compliance:

- What rating would members give the provision of secure parking for logistics vehicles in the area and are there any comments on freight crime?
- Members agreed that there is no provision for safe parking in East Anglia. Cambridge is considered to be the safest spot, however, even this is not completely secure. They also commented that fuel theft has become a real issue, as has goods theft, and members feel that this is largely down to organised crime groups who travel across county lines.

5). Fair transition to a green economy:

- What rating do members give the provision of electric charging points accessible for logistics vehicles in the region, and what engagement has there been on this with devolved, regional or local authorities?
- Members commented that they do not want to be early adopters as they believe they will end up with a stranded asset. Members also reported cases of operators spending millions on now inoperable HGVs. Range is still a huge issue. The Council agreed that there is no financial incentive for using these vehicles at the moment, and with margins already thin, this is not helping business.

A2 Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness

- Members unanimously agreed that the guide was in a good place. The only minor comment was on the clarification around the use of 'could' and 'should' and thus the potential for misinterpretation.
- In general, members felt that it is helpful for them to understand the expectations of the DVSA and that they would therefore like to see the guide updated as often as is practical.

A3 Road Safety Priorities

- Members believe that the operator license needs to be brought down to 2.8t in line with Europe. As well, the general design of cabs – members believe it is over-complicating/stimulating for drivers (technology is beneficial, however, it can be deemed a distraction at times).

- Members agreed that LGVs are unregulated. They commented that the safety standards on HGVs are exceptional compared to LGVs. Thus, it is believed that the safety standards of HGVs must be met by their LGV counterparts.
- One member also noted that we should be more clear about the distinction between HGVs and LGVs.

A4 Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Refuelling and Recharging

- Members are still waiting to hear from government as to which fuel/energy source will be the right one for them. They felt that there is not enough public access to electrical vehicle chargers, and that a deadline of 2035 would be unrealistic for HGVs.
- Members reiterated that it is imperative that refuelling/recharging be done at their base/depot. However, the Council commented that there is simply not the power available to support this. When trying to correct this, members complained that their engagement with DNOs is low if at all. Individuals reported of cases whereby they had engaged with their DNO about infrastructure, but were met with little in the way of planning. It was concluded by the Council that there are no long-term plans in place from the DNOs.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- The Council was asked if it had heard of or seen the Labour Party's 'Small Business Recommendations' and 'Manifesto' – to which the Council answered they had not.
- During the Council, it was noted that Transport for London (TfL) does not specify the actual number of cyclists killed by HGVs, just a %. However, this isn't correct. The following is taken from the Executive Summary of the 'One Year On' report issued by TfL. The figures are not listed as 'cyclist' as they are only one part of the vulnerable road user classification – pedestrians, horse riders, mobility scooters, etc are included:

'The number of fatal collisions involving an HGV where vision was cited as a contributory factor has fallen compared to previous years (six in 2021, compared to eight in 2020 and nine in 2019). The overall number of serious injuries involving HGVs has also fallen from 48 in 2017 to 17 in 2021'.

ACTIONS FROM MEETING

- With regard to the change in venue, the Secretary has actioned a request to ask where members of the Council travel from. It has been duly noted that Delta Hotels by Marriott Huntingdon is on the boundary border.
- At the next meeting of the Council, an election will held to vote in the next Chair for the East of England Freight Council. John Burbridge has served his two years as Chair. I would like to thank John for his continued efforts in supporting me as Secretary (Ellis Shelton) and for representing and promoting the thoughts and opinions of the East of England Council at Road Council. I would also like to thank him for his invaluable input.
- A request was made to look into the Review of Section 88. It was commented that the section must be reviewed or face dismissal. The Secretary noted this and will address it with colleagues at Logistics UK.

ATTENDEES

Chairman

John Burbridge Turners (Soham) Ltd

Members

Kelly White	Truck (UK) Limited
David Brown	MRCT Ltd
Adam Goode	Murphy Plant Ltd
Joe Addison	Glazewing Ltd
Richard Pelly	Pellys Transport & Regulatory Services Ltd
Alan Collier	MacIntyre Transport Ltd
David Hunter	Movianto UK Ltd
Justin Gibson	A S Miles Consulting Ltd
Ashley Holland	FreshLinc Ltd
Paul Hutchings	Luton Borough Council
Andy Belcher	For Farmers UK Ltd
Kevin Barcroft	CMS SupaTrak

Ed Barker
Gill Barrow
Ian McCann

Agricultural Industries Confederation
Agricultural Industries Confederation
Norfolk County Council

Staff

Michelle Gardner
Ellis Shelton

Deputy Director - Policy
Senior Policy Advisor