

## South Central Freight Council minutes

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01 February 2024  
09:30 – 11:30  
Virtual Meeting

### INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was chaired by Paul Needle from Smith & Sons Bletchington 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 the government's assessment of Portsmouth's Clean Air Zone in November, which revealed that air quality standards for Portsmouth had not yet been met. While an encouraging 94% of monitored areas were found to comply with air quality standards, specific locations continue to face persistent challenges. As a result, the current CAZ will remain in operation for the foreseeable future and non-compliant taxis and private hire vehicles, buses, coaches and HGVs will continue to be charged if traveling within the CAZ.

### 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.
- Regarding restrictions, members cited a lack of skills as a genuine cause for concern and an issue that is holding the sector back.

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 A34, noting it as a cause for concern.
  - 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.
- 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 awareness of career prospects within the sector is very low amongst young people. They report no support from schools or colleges within the area to help promote the sector and its job prospects.
  - Members of the Council unanimously agreed that if this issue is not acted upon, road operators in the future will not be able to continue operating at their current levels.
- 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 was a national shortage of secure parking, including overnight facilities. They also commented that fuel theft has become a real issue.
- 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. They appreciate that grants are available for EV charging, however, there is a huge reluctance to commit to switching to full EV as a result of a complete lack of governmental support and charging infrastructure.
  - 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. 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.
- The only minor comment from members was that the document should state that it needs to be understood by all in the transport industry.

## **A3 Road Safety Priorities**

- Members agreed that freight has done a lot to 'clean up its image' over the years and that others must follow suit to protect industry's reputation and standards. An example cited by a couple of members was LGVs. They believe that it is perceived that there is no regulation around LGVs. This must change to curb public opinion.
- The Council agreed that Direct Vision Standard (DVS) is a useful tool, however, universal implementation is key.
- 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.
- The Council fears that both the DNOs and government believe the 'market' will resolve the energy/infrastructure issue. However, it is believed that this is a counter-productive approach and will lead to further delays in the sector fully decarbonising.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 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'.

## ATTENDEES

### Chairman

Paul Needle                      Smith & Sons Bletchington Ltd

### Members

Damian Ayling	Short Group Ltd
Adam Conrad	David Cover & Son Ltd
Alan Asbury	CLS Energy (Consultancy) Ltd
Chris Cooling	Day Aggregates
Jerry Ward	John Lewis Partnership
Karl Wintle	Geotechnical Engineering Ltd
Emma Logan	Test Valley Borough Council
Mark Sayers	Churchill Freight Services Ltd
Matthew Wright	Freightliner Group Ltd

### Staff

Jonathan Walker	Head of Cities and Infrastructure
Ellis Shelton	Senior Policy Advisor