

## South Central Freight Council minutes

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Tuesday 16 May 2023

09:30 – 13:00

DoubleTree by Hilton Newbury North, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 8XY

### 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, 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: Driver CPC Review; Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness; Direct Vision Standard; MOT Extension.

### AGENDA ITEMS

#### A1 MOT Testing for Earned Recognition (ER) Operators

- Ellis summarised the agenda item, presenting an overview of potential proposals to introduce new MOT testing options for ER operators.
- Members concluded that there are no ER operators in the room. In reasoning for this, members agreed that it wouldn't be feasible for smaller operations to be ER operators.
- Members agreed that the priority for DVSA should be improving its service provisions. Examples included: improved MOTs; improved enforcement on the road. However, members agreed that the DVSA is hampered by a shortage of technicians.
- When asked about what would increase ER membership, members agreed there is insufficient proof to prove that ER is functioning and instead, they would like to see an improvement in DVSA's operational capacity, rather than an increase in ER. Members felt that the introduction of ER operators could create a two-tier industry in favour of larger operations.

#### A2 Compliance Standard for Lighter Trailers

- In response to interest on the topic from an All-Party Parliamentary Group, Ellis provided an outline of the document, which intended to develop Logistics UK's position on requirements for lighter trailer maintenance.
- Members fed back that lots of operators that run trailers don't maintain them, and the sector would therefore benefit from them being checked. Or, DVSA improving enforcement. As well, there isn't the capacity to deliver MOTs on existing vehicles, so questioned how testing could be expanded to trailers.

- Members would want to examine the findings of an impact assessment on the capacity of the testing network and which workshops were able to MOT trailers before approving the implementation of MOT testing for trailers. Additionally, they would want to know the test's content, such as if a braking test would be included.

### **A3 Smart Motorways**

- Ellis offered an outline of the document, which intended to update Logistics UK's position on smart highways in light of recent pronouncements.
- Members concurred that the public needs greater information through the media other than TV commercials – social media platforms used by those of all ages were suggested as another outlet. As well, it was agreed that more care should be taken to ensure that the matrix signals are accurate because most individuals don't believe them and disregard the information.
- All members agreed that the refuge areas need to be closer together and that a 'smart' motorway should be informing drivers that there is a stationary vehicle. Generally, members are in favour of smart motorways. However, there is cause for concern over the safety of them.

### **EXTERNAL PRESENTATION**

- Simon Barrable, Engagement Officer for the Thame Valley Chamber of Commerce Group, provided an overview of Local Skills Improvement Plan's (LSIPs) in the Berkshire region. The Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs are a three-year review of and plan for skills to meet the current and future needs of business.

### **A4 Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill**

- Ellis provided members with an update on the status of the Bill, which is designed to address EU-derived laws that have remained on UK statute books after Brexit. Anything now in effect that is not expressly kept or updated will expire on December 31, 2023. Though there is a supposition that this will be changed, a significantly lower number of legislation will be promptly repealed.
- Members were questioned on any laws they would want to see eliminated as well as potential areas for improvement. The Road Transport (Working Time) Directive has received criticism for being unduly bureaucratic, confusing, and interfering with drivers' ability to make a living. But there was no general agreement among the members. In order to ease trade frictions after Brexit, there was a general focus on the need for legislation and regulations to be simplified and approached with flexibility.
- Members all agreed that, if you change the rules too much, international operators will be the ones that suffer the most. The UK cannot be seen to be putting restriction on itself.

### **A5 'Last Mile' Urban Logistics**

- Ellis Shelton introduced and gave an overview of the 'Last Mile' paper. Ellis stated that Logistics UK are in the early stages of developing their position on issues relating to the decarbonisation of urban logistics.
- Members agreed that there is a strong appetite for new technologies and fuels. However, there was an aligned uncertainty over the correct one to use and the unsustainable costs. This has resulted in a hesitancy to be an early adopter.
- There is criticism that there is not a joined-up strategy to cities and that Logistics UK should prioritise establishing such a model so that operators are held to the same standards and goals. As well, energy infrastructure should be rolled-out by and provided by government, rather than being industry led.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Attendance was confirmed for UK Road Council on 8 June.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Wednesday 18 October, 09:30 – 13:00 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Newbury North, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 8XY

### **ATTENDEES**

**Chairman**

Paul Needle                      Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd

**Members**

Mick Dearle                      LWC Drinks  
Karl Wintle                      Geotechnical Engineering Ltd  
Emma Logan                      Test Valley  
Peter Staines                      Peter Staines Refrigeration Ltd  
Rob Malone                      E P Barrus Ltd  
Gary Locock                      NSG Pilkington  
Chris Cooling                      Day Group Ltd

**Guests**

Simon Barrable                      Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group

**Staff**

Chris Yarsley                      Senior Policy Manager - Road Freight Regulation  
Ellis Shelton                      Policy Advisor  
Katie Adams                      Policy Analyst  
Marco Scalzo                      Membership Relations Manager