Minutes of the meeting held at Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford

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| **Chair** |  |
| Simon Parsons | Aviva – Chair (stand-in) |
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| **Council member** |  |
| Bruce Robb | Conserv |
| Dominic Palmer | Conserv |
| Nathan Carr | Mills Waste Solutions |
| James Quick | CSG |
| Mark Karkeek | Southwest Water |
| Mark Davis | Ford Fuels Ltd. |
| Carne Bate | Muller |
| Mark Hope | Ab Agri Ltd. |
| John Phelps | Grundon |
| Lois Robinson | Dave Robbins Transport Consultants |
| Dave Robbins | Dave Robbins Transport Consultants |
| Lee Horrocks | Truronian Coaches |
| John Walsh | Smiths News |
| Paul Willis  Joe Drew  Adam Westaway  Derek Jennings | Gregory Distributions  BOC  Core Highways  Day Aggregates |
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| **Logistics UK** |  |
| Jonas Keat |  |
| Julie Richards  Josh Fenton |  |
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| **Guest Speakers** | A303 Stonehenge Project Team |
| Andrew Clark  Charlotte Brown |  |
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**Competition Law compliance**

Members were directed to the Competition Law compliance statement in the Policy Report.

**Matters arising from UK Modal Councils and Working groups**

Members were given updates on the modal Councils and working groups.

**Secretary’s Report**

Members were given an update on the following issues:

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| * UK Budget * Driver CPC | * Direct Vision Standard (DVS) * MOT testing for Earned Recognition Operators |
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**External Presentation – A303 Stonehenge Project Team**

Andrew Clark and Charlotte Brown from the A303 Stonehenge project team were in attendance to give members an update on the progress of the A303 Stonehenge Tunnel scheme. Members were given an idea of the timeline that this project will likely take, and the potential benefits to such a development.

Members posed a series of questions regarding the scheme:

* Has a survey been carried out regarding the impacts this will have on traffic in the area?
* Has this project been coordinated with railway operators, in order to understand the impacts that it will have on their business?

The team confirmed that they have conducted a traffic survey, and that they will look into how they can coordinate with railways moving forward.

Members agreed that they would like to receive further updates on this project, and that Logistics UK can serve as a line of direct contact between members and the team regarding future developments.

**Regional Items – Questions from Bristol on potential enabling infrastructure and services for operators**

Members were posed a number of questions set by Bristol City Council, who are currently exploring what types of infrastructure and services would help them to more easily and efficiently service the Bristol area.

Members were asked how their experience has been delivering goods in Bristol since the introduction of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ). Respondents said that it had become more difficult, and noted that they will often incur fines in Bristol as the alternative would be to not fulfil their orders.

Members noted that they had been doing work to become more compliant, using the right vehicles when they can, but that this is not always an option, particularly for smaller operators.

Members were then asked for their views on the prospect of last-mile consolidation in Bristol. In response, they said that this would be very difficult due to the differences in delivery times as well as the competitiveness of business that would be using this approach in tandem. Members were not against the idea in principle, but will need to see robust planning around this idea and evidence that it will be both workable and helpful for business. They also suggested that Bristol should be consulting with pallet networks in Bristol in order to determine the feasibility of such a scheme.

Members agreed that they would like to hear from Bristol City Council at a future meeting of this forum, in order to receive more detail on this.

**A1 – Election Priorities for England and the South West**

*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 would prefer for 20mph speed limits to not be introduced in the South West, having seen the impact this has had in Wales.

Members noted that logistics productivity in the South West was 24% lower than in England as a whole, and therefore they are starting from a disadvantaged point when it comes to boosting productivity and growth.

Continued investment in road infrastructure will be needed, as the surface of the roads as a whole is not good enough. However, members did not have particular roads or areas in mind for upgrades, rather they felt that the playing field should be levelled by ensuring a base level of quality on all roads.

*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 noted that they would prefer for 20mph speed limits not to be introduced in the region.

- There are issues with road maintenance, as members felt that they should be better maintained across the board. Rather than identifying a list of roads in the region which are particularly in need of repair, members agreed that there should be better care paid to the entire network so as to ‘level the playing field’. That said, one member did note particular issues with the A350 between Shaftesbury and Bradford, which is both too narrow and too steep.

*3) Skills partnerships 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 said that the number of technician apprentices is lower than previous. The current rates being paid by local authorities is currently well below what private companies can afford to pay, and this is making it very difficult for the public sector to hire them.

The South West has a relatively small talent pool, so the fact that many previous technicians have retired or retrained in recent years presents an issue. There is a need to entice those with the skills back into the industry.

Members felt that awareness of career prospects within the sector is very low among 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 have experienced issues with freight crime, however this mostly occurs when their drivers are travelling outside the region. In the South West it is less of an issue, although there is still some theft going on.

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. Members felt that the punishments are currently too lenient, and therefore that if they were made more harsh, this would help to reduce crime. There is also a lack of safe places to park which drives up crime further.

*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 feel that there are not enough pubic chargepoints, and also that the 3kW chargers that are often available are not sufficiently powerful for charging their vehicles efficiently. Members have engaged with DNOs when upgrading power supplies, but this has been very costly for those who have done it.

Members felt that there is not a financial incentive for using these vehicles at the moment, and with margins already thin, this is not helping business.

**A2 – Guide to Maintaining Road Worthiness (GTMR) refresh**

Members said that the current GTMR did clarify a lot of areas, and that it is currently fit for purpose in terms of providing a guide. While it is not law, members felt that it needs to be kept up to date.

Members said that language within the guide around advanced driver systems is somewhat vague and could use clarification.

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**

One member noted that we should be more clear about the distinction between HGVs and LGVs.

Members noted that speed reduction had become a large focus of their safety training, and that this was having a positive impact.

Members also noted that the rise in the use of e-scooters has led to a situation in which drivers are often the only ones held to account. Since e-scooter and e-bike users don’t require a license to be on the road, they don’t receive any penalties on their license when they are at fault for an accident.

Members agreed that from a regulatory perspective, forcing cyclists to undertake some form of formal training would help to reduce the number of accidents on the road.

**A4 – Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) refuelling and recharging**

Members are still waiting to hear from government 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.

A lot of businesses have gone full-steam ahead on their plans, so the new phase-out dates will not impact them much because they are already committed and even if they wanted to turn back, their customers would not accept that.

Members feel that there is a first user disadvantage when it comes to ZEVs, because they may end up backing a technology which is not carried forward in future. The costs of upgrading power supplies for electric vehicle charging is also very high, and members feel they are bearing this cost on behalf of the grid which needs to be upgraded anyway.

**AOB**

No other business raised.

Date of next meeting – 22 May 2024