

East Midlands Freight Council Minutes

Tuesday 10 October 2023, 08:30 – 12:00

Risley Hall Hotel, Derby Road, Risley, Derbyshire, DE72 3SS

INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was chaired by Carl Hughes of Hughes Driver Training Ltd.
- Attendees were welcomed and introductions made.
- The minutes of the last meeting were approved, and members were updated on a query made at the last meeting about the Truck Cartel action. All other matters arising were completed.
- Members were reminded about the competition law compliance guidance on page 5 of the Policy Report.

UK MODAL COUNCILS & SECRETARY'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Road Council meeting held on 8 June and recent meetings of modal councils and workings groups. They were updated on the progress of other issues including the Autumn Statement, Direct Vision Standard, the new Longer Semi-Trailer requirements and the announcement during the meeting of the Government's response to the Driving Licence Flexibility for alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs) up to 4.25t consultation.

ACTION: Members were asked to send in details of their experience about the new requirements for longer semi-trailers and whether this is a barrier to entry for new entrants to Phil Lloyd plloyd@logistics.org.uk.

Some members reported issues with GNSS, with their drivers reporting seeing the Tachograph reset itself to a future date, sometimes more than a year ahead. Investigations do not indicate this is related to a particular manufacturer, vehicle, user or geographical area and when sending the machine back to the manufacturer no fault is found

Carl Hughes, Hughes Driver Training and Bob Sands, Prompt Training confirmed they will be attending the next Road Council meeting on 9 November. Allison Kemp (AIM Commercial Services Ltd) confirmed that she will also be attending as a former Road Council Chair.

Laura Newton, Smith Bowyer Clarke and Nigel Wright, National Grid expressed an interest in attending.

ACTION: Denise Beedell (DB) to notify Chris Yarsley, of confirmed attendees.

REGIONAL ITEMS

Members were updated on matters from around and near to the Midlands, including the proposed Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone as well as the consultation by London Councils about PCN charges. Members voiced concerns about recent announcement regarding the curtailment of the HS2 line beyond Birmingham, including concerns that the promised use of funds for other projects will not be delivered. Some members said that this could put local construction businesses in jeopardy resulting from the loss of promised contracts and some compulsory purchase order payments have not been paid in full yet, even though the owners had relocated to other premises. Generally, it was felt that the cancellation would impact negatively on the East Midlands' economy.

ACTION: DB to circulate the link to the London councils PCN consultation.

UPCOMING ISSUES AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR EAST MIDLANDS

Members discussed upcoming East Midlands issues and key stakeholders for policy engagement in 2024. Suggested issues and speakers included:

- HS2
- Understanding the issues and history of proposals around the A1.
- Derby – Abbey Hill route proposals by Highways England to address bottleneck issues.
- Smart Motorways – frequency and installation of refuge areas.
- In person meeting with a Traffic Commissioner, such as Richard Turfitt, to attend a 2024 East Midlands FC meeting or to explore holding a dedicated TC meeting for a joint Midlands FC meeting.
- Speaker from DVSA or DVLA.

ACTION: Members to flag any issues that emerge or suggest speakers to DB.

THE SKILLS GAP AND LOGISTICS UK'S APPRENTICE ACCREDITATION

Ian Wright, General Manager - Major Account Development and Annie Graham (AG), Apprenticeship Manager at Logistics UK discussed the Skills Gap with members.

Discussions on the skills gap covered:

- HGV shortages are no longer being seen across the country, but there are still problems in some regions.
- Lack of consumer spending was suggested as a reason the situation has eased.
- Lack of technicians is a sector-wide issue with wage rates of over £20 per hour to retrain reported.
- HGV qualifications are no longer offered by colleges – they only do courses relating to cars.
- Moving from one marque to another can be challenging.

AG gave a presentation on Logistics UK's new Apprentice Accreditation course for transport supervisors with the first cohort of students starting in January 2024, followed by the next group in March/April. The presentation was generally well received by members. The option for managers to view progress of apprentices was particularly welcomed. AG was asked whether the course can be undertaken by 16-17 year olds.

ACTION: AG agreed to check on the age criteria and report back.

AGENDA ITEMS

A1 WINDSOR FRAMEWORK AND BORDER TARGET OPERATING MODEL

Feedback was sought from members on the Windsor Framework and the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM). Very few members thought they would be affected by the new fuels, and most could not provide much feedback. They said that not enough information is being shared and they felt that the understanding of information that operators are expected to have is unfeasible. It was also felt that different retailers could interpret the rules differently, adding challenges for operators. There was general agreement that the new rules would result in a contraction of UK logistics operations.

A2 PARKING RESTRICTIONS

Members discussed their experiences of new parking regimes and restrictions. Members commented that there had been a lot of restrictions (through covenants) with new housing developments for many years, such as excluding vans from parking on driveways and nearby roads. However, over time, enforcement tends to relax. Some areas allow plain vans, and only restrict vans with company livery.

These restrictions can compromise vehicle and equipment security and members said that where they were able to do so, drivers taking vehicles home improves productivity, especially for drivers who are 'on call'. There were also impacts on the Working Time Directive, if drivers must travel to a central hub before starting a shift. Going straight to jobs from home was more sustainable as it reduced commuting mileage and emissions.

Members felt that Logistics UK should promote the role of vans and the importance to the economy, and that drivers should be able to take their work vehicle home. It was felt there was a prejudice from the general public about vans as SUVs are often bigger than many vans used by the service sector and SMEs, and some asked what the difference was between a company car and a company van.

Some operators do not have adequate depot space to park all company vans, especially in urban centres, and some small business owners, or even householders, may choose to run a van for both business and personal use.

A3 STATUTORY ROLE FOR FLEET ENGINEERS

Members discussed the role of Fleet Engineer and considered the proposals from Logistics UK's Engineering Forum members on the concept of making the role a statutory requirement within the Operator Licencing regime.

There was no consensus on whether the role of Fleet Engineer should be made a statutory requirement. Many agreed that an engineering background was useful to counter proposed cost cutting measures that could compromise safety and compliance. Many observed that it depended on the size and type of business, especially as additional costs to the business would be more keenly felt by smaller operations.

There were comments that whilst the qualifications required by Transport Managers are well understood, not all Transport Manager fully understand the reasons why they need them.

There was agreement that maintenance providers need to be more accountable, but ultimately if Transport Managers are properly trained and monitored it was felt that there should not be an issue.

Other general comments included:

- Directors now better understand their obligations under Operator Licensing and that the final responsibility sits with Transport Managers. While there is a risk that requiring the employment of a fleet engineer could dilute the role of TM, there was agreement that if employed, fleet engineers should be properly qualified.
- Larger fleets are more likely to have a fleet engineer who acts as an internal auditor and felt that a clear definition of the role of fleet engineer would be necessary.
- If the testing facilities are available, independent testers can often be better than main dealers.

A4 SCHENGEN IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS

Members were informed that the Department of Transport (DfT) is seeking feedback from logistics operators on the Schengen immigration restrictions.

No members at the meeting had been affected directly by the restrictions. However, some said that it could potentially be an additional expense for businesses that have to set up a base in the EU. Many felt there was a significant lack of awareness, and this could be a reason that businesses are not adapting their operating models.

It was suggested this was why trailers are being dropped at ports rather than continuing to the receiving destination and that many drivers enjoy staying away from home, especially in the events sector.

There was general agreement that 90 days is not an adequate period.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Venue:** While members liked the venue location and size of the room, there was general agreement that the facilities and lack of service meant that Risley Hall was not an appropriate venue. Member liked the Hilton East Midlands Airport, M1, Junction, 24 Derby Rd, Derby DE74 2YZ, where the previous meeting had been held.
- **Policy Report Changes:** Members said they would have been fine with the changes if the equipment at the venue had been better. Without visible presentation slides a hard copy was necessary, especially for agenda items. Some members said they liked a hard copy to make notes, but the majority were happy to receive an electronic version.
- **Name Badges:** These were requested for future meetings.
- **Tachographs:** Members reported issues for accessing information from the new Gen2 Tachographs when inserting a new card and asked if the manufacturers cannot be accountable for this on behalf of the industry. Some members said they still use analogue tachograph, and it was flagged that some providers have given notice that analogue tachograph will be ending. It was confirmed that Logistics UK still offer an analysis service for analogue tachographs.
- **GTMR changes and brake testing:** Question asked about decelerometers and frequency of brake testing. It was confirmed that even if using decelerometers, laden brake testing should still be undertaken regularly.
- **Drivers' licence checks:** Question asked about the recommended frequency of checks, and it was confirmed that this depends on how many points are held, but the recommendation was at least every three months.
- **Next meeting:** There was a comment that holding the May meeting just before a bank holiday weekend could diminish attendance.

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 1st February 2024 – time and venue to be confirmed.

Thursday 2nd May 2024 - time and venue to be confirmed.

ACTION: DB to circulate placeholder invitations and slides of the meeting to the group.

The meeting concluded at 11:55.

ATTENDEES

Chair

Carl Hughes

Hughes Driver Training

Speakers

Annie Graham

Logistics UK

Ian Wright

Logistics UK

Members

Mariusz Balabanski

Nottingham City Council

Richard Black

PDRS Ltd

James Hopkinson

Longcliffe Quarries

Allison Kemp MBE

A I M Commercial Services Ltd

Mark Lee

Kal Tire Ltd

Leanna Miles

A S Miles Consulting Ltd

Laura Newton

Smith Bowyer Clarke

Bob Sands

Prompt Training

Kevin Smith

GXO Supply Chain UK

Hayley Starbuck

Biffa

Gary Tomlinson

Central England Co-operative

Adrian Wanford

Balfour Beatty

Nigel Wright

National Grid

Staff

Denise Beedell

(Secretary) Senior Policy Manager

Dan Newton

Affiliate Membership Manager

Ally Salter

Membership Relations Manager

Ellis Shelton

Policy Advisor – Multi Modal