

## East Midlands Freight Council Minutes

Thursday 1 February 2024, 08:30 – 12:00

East Midlands Airport Hilton Hotel, M1 Junction 24, Derby, DE74 2YZ

### 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 about the age criteria for the apprenticeships presented at the last meeting.  
*“Learners can register on the L3 TMCPC from the age of 16. However, the DfT feels that it should be made clear that the Traffic Commissioner in GB have indicated that this is highly unlikely that they would accept anyone under the age of 18 as an appropriate transport manager for the purpose of satisfying the professional competence requirements to hold or apply for an operator licence.”*
- All matters arising were completed or ongoing.
- Members were reminded about the competition law compliance guidance on page 5 of the Policy Report.

### SECRETARY’S REPORT AND KEY NATIONAL UPDATES

Members received a report from the Road Council meeting held on 9 November and were updated on the progress of other issues including Driver CPC, the Budget submission and the Direct Vision Standard.

### REGIONAL ITEMS

Members were updated on matters from around and near to the Midlands, including the Midlands mayoral elections 2024 and the in-production Midlands Manifesto, the Midlands Rail Hub, Zero Emission HGV and Infrastructure Demonstration (ZEHID) trials winners in the Midlands.

Members discussed the issue of charging vehicles and potential issues regarding infrastructure away from arterial routes, where there was no provision for rapid charging. Where operators want to charge at site, many have struggled with power capacity at some sites. One member said they have 40 vehicles on trial including some 18t electric truck and tractor unit, 160 electric vans – and reported they struggle with getting sufficient charge to provide enough mileage range in the time the vehicle is available to charge.

### EXTERNAL PRESENTATION

Dave Rose, CEO and Founder of Voltloader, gave a presentation about their plans for all-electric bulk-haulage solutions for the agricultural sector. A discussion followed covering:

- Requirement to charge throughout the day
- Recognising the limitation of vehicle range and capabilities
- Challenge of fixing energy prices
- Concern about government plans
- Availability of public charging for commercial vehicles
- The use of battery storage to support cost and supply resilience.
- Flexible customer delivery times and loads
- Benefits of having a chargepoint near to barns with solar panels
- Choice of vehicles and charger types.
- Need to increase axle weight allowances.

### AGENDA ITEMS

#### A1 ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR NATIONS AND REGIONS

Feedback was sought from members on the policy asks for devolved governments and English regional and local politicians.

Members felt that E Mids moves from crisis to crisis and they are hoping the mayoral elections will help to address this issue. The also reported that Nottingham City Council is looking to close two park and rides which will add to congestion; in Leicestershire the authorities seem to wait to deal with fallen trees rather than undertaking tree maintenance. It was recognised that there is insufficient funding available for general road maintenance such as gully emptying leading to more flooding, limited places for vehicles to pull up and stop and there were comments that problematic deliveries are exacerbated by parking enforcement fines adding to costs.

Several road infrastructure points were referenced including:

- M1 Junction 21 southbound is a major bottleneck.
- A new link to the M69 is required.
- The three roundabouts on the A38 between Markeaton and Alfreton need to be upgraded.
- The work on the A1 had made a huge difference.

Regarding the section about a fair transition to a green economy, members felt there is limited support for the sector and pointed out that the £25,000 vehicle grant was not enough to make the business case, given that the hardware for HGV chargepoints can cost around £60,000 each. There was a discussion between members about whether there were enough public chargepoints for vans and whether the spaces were big enough with some locally disparities emerging.

Members report that HGV technician shortages remain. While several colleges in Nottingham train technicians the funding is unclear. HGV training apprenticeship was increased to £21,000 but there is a need to have high numbers to make it pay. Issues of positive participation from students were also noted.

Members said that freight crime is a big issue not helped by limited secure parking across the region. It was not that the M1 Junction 23 truck stop has a barrier and security and is good. Members reported uncertainty about where previously announced funding of £100k funding had been spent. The point was emphasised that it is not just about improving facilities, but that there is a requirement to improve security – especially at night. Frustratingly, CCTV is often not shared by motorway service area operators which hinders operators reporting incidents to police and claiming on insurance. Most truck stops are full at night with even more limited overnight spaces further south. Thurrock was mentioned as a particularly bad example.

## **A2 GUIDE TO MAINTAINING ROADWORTHINESS (GTMR) REFRESH**

Members discussed DVSA's plans to issue a refreshed version of the Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness (GTMR) in April 2024.

Members pointed to the use of the word 'Guide' in the title of the handbook which implies it is not compulsory and which leads to inconsistencies in the way testers use the guide.

There was a discussion about the new requirements for laden brake testing in the new guide and the difficulties experienced in the region for finding brake testing facilities and those that have the facilities are reluctant to serve small operators. Members also felt that on page 39, in the final paragraph, the work 'exceptionally' needed to be removed.

It was felt that greater clarity about maintaining electric vehicles should be included.

## **A3 ROAD SAFETY PRIORITIES**

Members were given a presentation on recently published safety statistics.

Examples what members are doing to improve safety records included fitting cameras and telematics. Those members who had fitted them, said that this needed to be done carefully and with plenty of management time allocated to managing concerns from drivers. It was reported by one member that reductions in offences are starting to be seen and that it had been three years since the equipment had been fitted. Another member reported a 25% reduction in van accidents in the 12 months since fitting telematics in vans.

Members noted that there has been an uplift in distractions over the past few decades, with the condition of the roads being and congestion cited as a key issue. Some members felt that the greater regulation of HGV was helpful in improving the safety record of this group, and it was suggested that this could be applied to Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) too.

There was a discussion about whether 20 mph zones have helped or hindered and general agreement that there must be greater enforcement of road regulation. It was observed that the changes to the Highway Code in respect of left turns have been helpful.

#### **A4 ZEV refuelling and recharging**

Members were asked about their plans to decarbonise their fleets and how they are preparing for the new phase out dates for sales of new, non-zero tailpipe emission road vehicles under 26 tonnes from 2035.

Members commented that there need to be significant uplift in government support and private sector investment, but there were concerns expressed about whether there is adequate grid capacity to meet demand.

One member was looking at energy and refuelling needs and are concerned about the speed that technology is moving that was faster than the lifetime of zero tailpipe emission vehicles, which may impact on new vehicle residual values.

Many members are reluctant to be a 'first-mover' and prefer to watch and observe how other operators handle the transition.

No members present were able to say what data has been collected about energy needs of battery electric vehicles and no members were aware of any discussions with the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) regarding future energy needs.

Member would be happy to consider a data collection template with colleagues when available.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Road Council representatives:** Darren Povey (M-Group) and Pip Bains (Pip Bains Consulting) confirmed they will be attending the next Road Council meeting on 8 February 2024. Carl Hughes (Hughes Driver Training) hoped to be able to attend and would confirm with Chris Yarsley. Bob Sands was unable to attend.

**ACTION:** Carl Hughes to confirm his attendance Road Council with Chris Yarsley.

**ACTION:** Denise Beedell (DB) to check if Allison Kemp (AIM Commercial Services Ltd) would be attending as a former Road Council Chair.

**ACTION:** DB to notify Chris Yarsley, of confirmed attendees.

**ACTION:** DB to circulate slides and draft minutes to members.

There was no other business raised.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 – date, time and venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 12:03

## ATTENDEES

### Chair

Carl Hughes Hughes Driver Training

### Speakers

Dave Rose Voltloader

### Members

Pip Bains	Pip Bains Consulting
Ross Baxter	Sciensus
Richard Black	PDRS Ltd
Nick Day	ADM Milling
Julie Gomez	Ziegler UK
James Hopkinson	Longcliffe Quarries
Richard Lawrence	Evri
Mark Lee	Kal Tire Ltd
Leanna Miles	A S Miles Consulting Ltd
Laura Newton	Smith Bowyer Clarke
Craig Perkins	Evri
Sarah Pheasant	Alloga UK
Darren Povey	M-Group
Chris Powell	Weightmans LLP
Bob Sands	Prompt Training
Kevin Smith	GXO Supply Chain UK
Adrian Wanford	Balfour Beatty
Michael Whatling	Ziegler UK
Nigel Wright	National Grid

### Staff

Denise Beedell	(Secretary) Senior Policy Manager
Edward Jones	Head of Environment Policy
Ally Salter	Membership Relations Manager
Marco Scalzo	Membership Relations Manager
Ian Wright	General Manager – Major Account Development