

South East Freight Council Minutes

30 January 2024
09:30 – 11:30
Online via MS Teams

INTRODUCTION

- Chair's welcome
 - Minutes of last meeting
 - Competition law compliance
- JF explains the rationale behind why this meeting had been moved online to try and encourage greater numbers of members to attend. Meeting was limited to 2 hours and fit within normal working hours.
 - No issues raised with the last minutes of the meeting.
 - Reminder about competition law compliance

Secretary's report

Report from the meeting of Road Council on 9 November and recent meetings of modal councils and working groups. Updates on other issues including Driver CPC, the Budget and Direct Vision Standard

- No members of SEFC are able to make roads council on 8 February 2024.

EXTERNAL PRESENTATION

Lower Thames Crossing, Eden Musyoki, Stakeholder Engagement and External Affairs

- After submission to Mark Harper, DfT Secretary of State, he has 3 months to decide.
- Dartford crossing maintenance is usually done by overnight closures. Media usually critical of the planning system.
- **ACTION** – JF to share petition with the SEFC members

Q&A

Q - Restriction on dangerous goods?

A - No

Q – Construction costs, HS2 situation, delays and cancellation has decreased confidence that it will be completed. We must be sure that once committed it needs to be seen through to its finish.

A – Consent isn't the final thing; money still has to come from Treasury. The petition is a vital part of getting this over the line. Need to show there is economic backing behind this.

Q – Will the crossing be chargeable?

A – Yes. Same system as Dartford. Same charge rate.

Q – Will there be driver facilities available at the crossing points? This is an opportunity.

A - None in the plans, have been liaising with Logistics UK. Facilities were in the plans at the start, but this was removed. There is option for them to be built once the project is built.

Q – Can the presentation be shared? Video very good, can we have a link to it?

A – **ACTION** – JF can circulate. Yes – links are available on YouTube and can be viewed here.

<https://www.youtube.com/@lowerthames>

Then and Now – 60 years of the Dartford Crossing

Q – As tender has gone out to get partners, considerable way down the track and cost already before its even got going.

A – This is nature of the process. Before permission is even given – lots of money spent.

- Eden requests that any thoughts about how the Dartford delays impact their businesses, they would be welcome and how the LTC will help address this.

ACTION: all members to send in info. <https://www.youtube.com/@lowerthames>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FsGQYkW_xs
https://www.britainremade.co.uk/lowerthamescrossing?recruiter_id=25007

REGIONAL ITEMS

Logistics UK invited to join Greater South East Freight Forum

- Subnational Transport Bodies (Transport for the South East, England's Economic Heartland & Transport East) across the SE England are now starting to take the freight sector seriously.

AGENDA ITEMS

Election priorities for nations and regions

It is more important than ever that Logistics UK has policy asks directly relevant to the devolved governments as well as English regional and local politicians. We are therefore seeking members' input on our policy asks for these audiences.

A1

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?*

- The state of the road. Wherever members travel the quality of roads, slows down traffic and can cause damage. Too much patching. Having a major effect on all transport.
- Planning issues. Struggling to find suitable premises (supplier); any premises authorise for motor use aren't suitable and won't allow auto repair. Just north of Heathrow. Don't understand why they are so many restrictions in that area. Really struggling to find anything at all.
- Roads – roadworks should be done, but no co-ordination. Road works after road works that compound issues. TfL had a scheme for overrunning schemes and fines. Seems to be that contractors can dig a hole and leave for days before returning. On major arterial routes there should be priority given to major routes for repairs. Member thought all the utilities were supposed to co-ordinate it and do their jobs at the same time. Sometimes the first person carrying out works causes subsequent problems, adding further to the delay of reopening the road. Member comments that companies risk assessing repairs – deeming overnight risk too great – more are being done day time only. Extending duration of roadworks and disruption.

Q – Is this a new change?

A – Member responds - Seeing more activity but does know if this is an active policy. Could it potentially save money by not paying night rates and putting in place mitigations to protect workforce.

Innovative and integrated infrastructure

- *What are the priorities for transport infrastructure upgrades in the region? While devolved governments and regions often do not have the funding to deliver such upgrades, they play a key role in the establishment of priorities.*

• *Are there any key roads in the region that are particularly in need of intensive repair and maintenance?*

- Members hoped the government has some priorities, especially on major routes. But on minor roads the potholes and patching are bad. What are the implications of not doing a proper resurface. It's about the quality of the work – not enough money or time spent doing it properly. Not so much where, more about what they do.
- Section of road in Surrey where artic HGVs went up a hill – so worn that the tractor unit lost grip on the road. Have written to Surrey County – they resurfaced about 25 yards – the points where our vehicles struggle. Within 2-3 years, the road surface is breaking up and crumbling. Who inspects the work carried out?
- Member comments that one problem is that lots of councils are in danger/at risk of bankruptcy. Limited budgets around roads – pushed to limits. No way out of the foreseeable future. Local roads, M25, A20, A2, many are used as a diversion route for the coastal routes. Until LA budgets are addressed this will continue. Maidstone – lots of holes, delays in repairs.
- Going back to the 60s – 50 years, 90s – 30 years, now it's only 10-year plans. All government, now not going past the next election. No coherent plan. Sound bites. Classic example – great presentation on LTC – desperately needed. HS2 – another brilliant plan, split up into small parts. All about the next election – need to encourage governments to think long term. Choice of low tax low service – or higher tax and better services.

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?*
- Skills partnership continues to be a serious shortage.

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?

- Parking is an ongoing issue; freight crime continues nationally. Current secure parking available is debatable. Needs to highlight that this is value for money and right quality to support the sector. Member rightly comments that these issues are regularly brought up at every meeting.

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?*
- Member comments that their company is involved with installing chargepoint power networks. They believe that Government is expecting more than can be provided. In SE they are fitting chargepoints – expecting to only be able to use half of them due to lack of power. Feel it's all just talk about to make it sound good.
- Electric charge points are being pushed out, however there are alternatives that no one mentions. None carry much credibility for logistics currently.

Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness (GTMR) refresh

A2

DVSA plans to issue a refreshed version of GTMR in April 2024, a year ahead of the main changes to brake testing in April 2025. This refresh could allow for other changes to the guide, should members believe them to be necessary.

- *Is the 2023 GTMR is generally fit for purpose?*
- Members have discussed with their transport manager and believed this is fit for purpose.
- *What changes, if any, should be made to the current GTMR and why?*

- P39 – in relation to brake testing final paragraph – request to remove the word ‘exceptionally’ – as vehicles should be ready anyway.
 - P53 – 5th paragraph – brake test reports to be a signed requirement. Inspector will have a printout from the machine, mostly transposed on to service and signed off – so member asks why is it a requirement to sign off a sheet that has also been signed and countersigned. It’s covered on the safety inspection sheet.
- *What items should be added to a revised GTMR and why?*
- Member adds that something should be added about 3rd party contractor in terms of weight distribution. Member still find that some 3rd party repairers don’t understand that if they are going to add weights, they need to put them in the right place. Some repairers still don’t look at the changes. There have been some question marks around that.
 - Some hauliers have restricted licences, generally because of the lack of requirement to have a qualified transport manager – there is lack of clarity over what is required. Can this be looked at to make it clearer for these types of hauliers? Is the message getting through that they need someone competent. Can the communication be improved throughout the GTMR.
 - A lot of workshops and operators don’t think this applies to them. Member does not believe the title is wrong, but there should be more emphasis that this is a working document for operators, workshops and anyone working with vehicles.
 - There is a point to do with tankers. Obviously, vehicles needed to be laden for test. Had an example of a tanker being kicked out for being loaded. More clarity required for testers and operators. This is a working document for everyone involved not just TMs. Needs to be emphasised more.

Road safety priorities

A3

Logistics UK is seeking member views on the industry’s priorities for improving road safety and reducing serious and fatal collisions on UK roads.

- *What examples can members provide of actions they have taken to improve the safety of their road operations and employees?*
- Fitting of DVS systems in London, which cannot be referred as just London Centric. Many operators are being forced to fit this. According to TfL it has reduced deaths and serious injury. Members don’t disagree with it, only the way it has been introduced and implemented.
 - Internal training for speed and awareness improvements.
 - Members have change specifications on their vehicles to add safety features – improve driver, lower cab trucks – improve visibility. Conducted a campaign on using telematics data. Focus on speeding in 20/30/40 mph zones. Now getting serious road rage from other drivers. Difficult to drive at 20mph – but using telematics data shows drivers do this but are getting loads of complaints and aggression. Drivers are assessed when they drive for the business – if involved in incident they are removed and interviewed, and driver put on assessment. We can all do more, but these are what we are currently working on at the moment.
 - Road rage is becoming a serious problem, member has looked at their policy regarding dash cam footage and are using the dash cam safety scheme to report incidents. Makes it clear on our vehicles that road rage won’t be tolerated and will be reported. We now have a process for passing to police. Need a national framework for this.
 - Member has said this to TfL – feel we’ve done everything asked, but it feels very one sided. Want to know what TfL are doing to discipline and discourage. They say they send out training bulletins and putting more police on junctions to stop cyclists – but Met Police don’t have the police to do this. Regulators need to look at what other people do that interact with freight sector – more discipline required. Quite a number of cyclists and moped drivers who go through red lights and ride on pavements. Pedestrians are also harder to police.
- *What more could the logistics industry do to further improve road safety?*
- DVS doesn’t have to just be London it could be done elsewhere to improve safety nationally.
- *What needs to be done by infrastructure providers, government, police, regulators etc. to further improve safety?*

- Some members have a very large fleet – which requires major investment in telematics and camera systems. The cost has been phenomenal – our directors are asking if they have had enough payback. We've reduced the number of drivers using mobile phones. Should the government look at this, number of police is reducing, cameras in most but not all areas.
- Should there be tax incentives for road safety equipment they invest in. Would like to introduce the equipment more, but unable to due to high costs. Government needs to fund more of this stuff, more money to operators to come to us and encourage more to put it in.
- E-scooters – overtaking road vehicles sticking to the 20mph limit.
- Members have had discussions internally about people using hire bikes – large groups – got to be some sensible behaviours. Safety aspect of road design – Bank junction was improved.
- Cyclist using lanes the wrong way and deliberately damaging mirrors. Other examples of deliberate damage from moped riders against HGVs. Had camera footage sent to police – but they couldn't find the individual. The offender knew there would be no come back.

Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) refuelling and recharging

A4

With phase out dates for the sale of new, non-zero tailpipe emission road vehicles 26 tonnes and under set for 2035, the infrastructure for refuelling and recharging is becoming a key concern of operators. Logistics UK is keen to understand how members are preparing for these dates and what the infrastructure requirements will be for ZEV fleets.

- *When planning for decarbonisation, do members have a clear understanding of their: Future energy/refuelling needs?*
- Challenge for one member is they have to be dangerous goods compliance and we are bottom of the queue. Many not looking at these vehicles. Any support will be good. No conversation with anyone yet.
- *Are members willing to share their data with Logistics UK to collate and forward to relevant agencies anonymously?*
- Some members have people in their organisations working on this – happy to approach them and come back to DB
- **ACTION** – All members to check internally if relevant data can be anonymously shared to DB.

AOB

Date of next meeting: Thursday 23 May 2024

- JF spoke with members about future meeting formats. Members commented that hosting online meeting has benefits, as it is easier to fit into normal working hours, without taking too much time away from the business.
- Members believe that having a full in-person day is easier than half days. Potentially this could combine freight councils, more guest speakers and MAC briefing. This is easier to qualify as professional development for members.
- Going forward an alternating model could be the preferred approach, with first and last meeting online and the middle meeting in May being a full day and taking place in-person.

Attendees

Paul Goss (Chair) - Thames Water Utilities
 Josh Fenton (Secretary) - Logistics UK

Barrie Wilson – FleetCheck
 Steve Kirchell – KCS
 Chris Cassley – Construction Plant-hire Association
 Ian Laughlin – Calor Gas
 Darren Povey – M-Group PFS
 Justin Fuller – Marwood Electrical
 Mark Fitzjohn – Marwood Electrical

Peter Pearce – ADM Milling Ltd
Gary Canning – G. Canning Consultant Transport Manager
Warren Rowe - MGroup Plant & Fleet Solutions
Lauren Austen-Nash - Countrystyle Recycling Ltd
Sophie Mileham - Countrystyle Recycling Ltd
Danny Rollins – BOC Ltd
Neythen Facey – Lime Logistics
Martin Taylor – Clancy
Jerry Ward – JLP
Jevon Moulton – Solstor UK Ltd
Chris Bull – Southern Water Services Limited
Denise Beedell - Logistics UK
Edward Jones – Logistics UK