**Introduction**

Chair, Ian Jarman (IJ), welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited people to introduce themselves. The council was reminded of the need to comply with competition law at all times.

Peter Murphy proposed adoption of the minutes of the last meeting. Simon Griffin seconded this proposal. Minutes approved.

**Secretary’s report and key national updates.**

Council Secretary, Josh Fenton (JF) gave an update on issues contained in pages 8-10 and pages 16-18 in the Policy Report. Issues covered included: decisions taken by Road Council, an update on Rail Council, ongoing efforts to improve Freight Councils and member engagement, a live DFT consultation on barriers to the uptake of zero emission vehicles, Logistics UK’s public affairs activity (page 4 of the Policy Report), publication of Logistics UK’s infrastructure network map, an update on the work of all of Logistics UK’s modal councils and Engineering Forums scheduled in 2025.

**Action:** Members to share further feedback on improvements on Council meetings to JF.

**Action:** Link to the DFT consultation to be provided in the minutes for members to directly respond to. Please find the link here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/zero-emission-vans-regulatory-flexibility/zero-emission-vans-regulatory-flexibility>

Nichola Mallon (NM) gave an overview of the situation at Holyhead Port and Logistics UK’s engagement with governments on the immediate response, contingency planning and a resilience action plan for individual ports and the port network. The Welsh government is establishing a government led multi-stakeholder taskforce to develop a new strategy for the future of Holyhead. Minister Lawless from the Irish Government will also help lead this work to ensure that the port will meet the future needs of both nations. Logistics UK has requested to be a member of this taskforce and NM asked members for feedback on how they had/are being impacted and priority actions required from government, ports, ferry operators and other key stakeholders going forward. Anglesey County Council has launched a survey to understand the impact that the unplanned closure of Holyhead Port has had on businesses. This survey can be found here - [Holyhead Port closure: impact survey](https://www.anglesey.gov.wales/en/Have-your-say/Consultations/Current-consultations/Holyhead-Port-closure-impact-survey.aspx). Logistics UK would encourage members to respond to this.

*Questions put to members:*

1. *What has been the impact on a) capacity, b) volumes and c) cost from the closure of Holyhead?*
2. *What action is needed going forward to ensure ports and key shipping routes are more resilient?*

Members discussion: Bigger companies and Irish hauliers were the most impacted. Hauliers trying to get to NI were badly impacted as trade rerouted to Cairnryan and other ports. This situation highlights the lack of infrastructure between north and south Wales.

**Action:** Members invited to provide feedback directly to NM via email nmallon@logistics.org.uk or a 121.

**Guest Speaker – Bethany Windsor, Logistics UK’s Head of Skills and Generation Logistics**

As agreed at the last Freight Council, Ian Jarman, Peter Murphy, Simon Griffin and Bethany Windsor met with Swansea College to explore the potential of putting on the logistics courses Wales needs to address the skills challenges. Logistics UK will continue to push this issue. Bethany Windsor (BW) gave an update on recent activity since joining Logistics UK, and an overview of Generation Logistics – a career awareness campaign on behalf of the industry aimed at young people, teachers and career advisors. The main tool for the campaign is social media.

BW asked members for feedback on the following questions to shape skills policy in Wales.

1. *What are the skills gaps both now and for the future, and why?*
2. *What are the main challenges in training and retaining employees?*
3. *What can our network – government, employers, training providers and Logistics UK – do to address the current and future skills needs?*

*Members discussion:*

There is a big shortage of technicians because they take so long to train, and training courses are all outside of Wales. As a result, Welsh businesses are left to fund the training themselves. Addressing this was one of the purposes of Logistics UK’s meeting with Swansea College. A member asked how do we make national policy impact local schools and colleges to attract people into our industry? There was a consensus that the focus needs to be on careers educators inside and outside of schools and the use of new social media platforms and influencers to reach young people. We also need to look to the future of the industry and the new skills that the industry will need. Members strongly feel that logistics should be recognised as a qualification - a BTEC etc to attract young people and compete with other sectors. This would put them on the start of a career path. Outside of apprenticeships, the career routes are very limited. There is also a need to target females given the increased opportunities from the shift to electric and alternative fuelled vehicles.

One member said that fitters, the lack of, and increasing age profile, is one of the biggest risks in their local authority. In terms of taking these issues forward, they recommended going through local government as it can be a quicker route to making change happen locally.

Members are frustrated that government does not recognise the critical importance of the industry to the Welsh economy given the rise of ecommerce. A member asked what is the position of the Department for Education on vocational education as the focus still seems to be too much on the academic side and university which overlooks a lot of intelligent people with practical minds that would be a great match for the industry? IJ pointed to the new Skills Minister, Jack Sargeant MS, and this is an issue Logistics UK is looking to meet him on.

Members strongly agree that there needs to be a top down, bottom up and joined up approach to deliver results.

**Action:** BW invited members to provide further feedback via a call or by email via bwindsor@logistics.org.uk and to share case studies of underrepresented groups in your workforce that can be used publicly.

**Action:** JF to share information on the Generation Logistics Ambassador Network and details of how to submit case studies along with the minutes.

**Action:** Logistics UK will be writing to both the Welsh Skills Minister, Jack Sargeant MS and Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Hayes MS, to request a meeting and will be using this feedback to inform the points we will be making at this meeting.

**Regional items** *(pages 25-26 in the Policy Report).*

JF gave an update on the following:

* A494 River Dee Bridge replacement scheme: consultation document – deadline 4 March 2025
* Welsh Government Draft Budget.
* Welsh Road Transport Advisory Group (WRTAG).
* Rescheduled road works to begin on A470.
* Welsh member gritting discussion.

*Members discussion:*

A494 – IJ views option E as the best option for the industry. One member argued that the M4 Relief Road should be the priority.

A470 – members happy to live with this 18-mile diversion for the upgrade but feel all road works could be completed more quickly as they cost hauliers money.

Winter gritting – JF explained that this item has been tabled following feedback from local authority members at the last Council meeting. Points members raised: it is not clear whether gritting is a statutory function. What constitutes an emergency? This all needs better defined. Local councils, due to budget pressure, are pushing more jobs onto community councils. For road safety reasons Councils should grit roads and cut grass verges. Council would have to consult with residents before any reduction of gritting the roads could occur. The consensus was that it is not just enough to grit the artillery roads, if schools cannot be opened and people cannot travel to work due to local roads not being gritted.

**Action:** JF to circulate a briefing note on gritting with the minutes.

**A1 - Budgets and Comprehensive Spending Review** (*page 11 of Policy Report)*

Following a challenging UK Budget for businesses in October 2024, a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) is expected in summer 2025 which will outline the UK government’s spending plans for at least three years and set capital budgets for the next five years. IJ asked members to provide feedback on how the UK Budget has affected their business and what their priorities are for the CSR to help inform Logistics UK’s response and lobbying work.

*Questions put to members:*

1. *What announcements in the UK and Welsh Budgets did members welcome and what are the biggest concerns?*

Members agreed that the increase in Employers’ Contribution to National Insurance and the rise in the National Minimum Wage (and upward pressure as a result on all wage bands in the workforce) are the biggest concerns and government does not realise this will only add to inflation. One member said this will cost their business an additional one million pounds. One member said that to balance out the increase in NMW, CEOs should have a small reduction in their salary rather than a negative focus on the lowest earners. One member felt that the government is creating an anti-business environment. Members felt that there should have been an incentive to transition to HVO and other alternative fuels in the budget and this was an opportunity missed.

1. *Looking ahead to the Comprehensive Spending Review:*
	1. *What priority asks should Logistics UK consider including in its submission to the UK government?*
	2. *Are there any areas where government departments or agencies could find savings through efficiencies or improvements in services?*

a) There should be incentivisation and a support package for low carbon and zero emission vehicles and fuel. This should include removal of restrictive regulations to support the use of longer semi-trailers given these restrictions were not in place during the 10-year trial.

1. One member suggested allowing operators to do their own testing. Another member cautioned against this given their experience of processes after an accident. Members suggested the use of AI to better streamline DVLA services. Improvements to planning would also support businesses who want to expand.

**A2 - Speed limits and national speed review** (*pages 12-13 in the Policy Report).*

Given the renewed focus, in recent years, by devolved administrations and local authorities across the UK on the issue of speed limits for safety and emission reasons, JF asked members to share their experiences in relation to reduced limits and/or increased enforcement.

*Questions put to members:*

1. *Have members experienced any changes to speed limits in their area recently? What has been the impact of these?*

The Tour of Britain for juniors had to be cancelled because it went though a 20mph hour zone and the cyclists would be going faster than that. One member said they go through 33 speed restrictions in their one-day journey, up from 12 previously and this level of change causes confusion. There was frustration among some members that after Ken Skates announced a roll back of the blanket 20mph, he has handed it to local authorities to decide. IJ suggested that Logistics UK writes to the Welsh government to request a review of the speed limit around Newport. One member who uses this route said the speed limit has resulted in less serious accidents.

1. *Have members experienced any increased speed limit enforcement activity?*

Members have not noticed a marked increase.

1. *Are members supportive of the proposed national speed limit changes in Scotland?*
	1. What would be the benefits of this change?
	2. Would there be any downsides?

Some members felt there was some benefit in terms of consistency for HGV drivers. There was support for increasing the speed limit for HGVs to 60mph even for set times in the day when roads are most busy. Another member pointed to the direction of travel in Europe which is about reducing speed not increasing it.

**Road regulation issues** (*pages 14-15 of the Policy Report).*

**A3 - Graduated driving licence** – IJ asked members for their views ahead of any review/potential call for evidence. JF stressed that this is not being introduced as a change in policy by government. Logistics UK is taking the opportunity of this round of Freight Councils to hear members views as a pre-emptive step in case government does decide to look at this.

*Questions put to members:*

1. What impact would the possible restrictions have on operations if newly qualified drivers faced restrictions on what they could do?

There would need to be a series of exemptions – care workers, a 17-year-old parent etc. There was agreement among members that this would introduce more barriers for the industry and that this appears to be a blanket wide approach to a problem of dangerous driving by a minority of young people. Members also said it would be challenging to enforce.

1. *Do members believe that newly qualified HGV drivers pose a greater risk to road safety?*

Depends on the mentoring/support provided in the workplace for newly qualified drivers and ongoing professional development opportunities. Members also made the point that new drivers largely don’t have bad habits.

**A4 - Domestic drivers hours** – JF again emphasised that this item has been tabled to gather members view in case there may be a future review/call for evidence. There is no change to domestic drivers hours planned at this time.

*Questions put to members:*

1. *Would members support a definition of a fixed calendar day for ‘working day’?*

Some members said yes as it would be easier to explain. Others said no, given their operations.

1. *Is the current definition of ‘duty’ sufficient? If not, what would members prefer to see?*

Members said the Working Time Directive should take precedence.

1. *Would members prefer to see a more precise definition of ‘adequate rest’? If so, what?*

Members felt this is too subjective and should be better defined.

1. *What demonstrable benefits would members gain if domestic hours recording was permitted via an app?*

One member said an app is easier to analyse. A number of members have switched to tacho cards, and this provides what is needed. The general consensus was not in favour of an app.

**AOB**

IJ reminded members of National Council on Thursday 13 February 2025 and opened the invitation to all members.

IJ met with Andrew Rustage (DVSA) who is retiring. He thanked the Council for his gift.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for taking the time to attend and participate in the discussion.

**Date of next meeting:**

Tuesday **20 May 2025**

Vale Resort, Hensol Rd, Hensol, Pontyclun CF72 8JY.

Freight Council meeting 09:30 – 12:30

Lunch 12:30 – 13:30

MAC Briefing 13:30 – 15:00

**Attendees:**

Ian Jarman (Chair) – Owens Group

Huw Salway – Euro Commercials

Dean Thomas – Cardiff Council

Matthew Hallam – Cardiff Council

Vincent Brickley – Tandem Transport

Gill Sheddick – Commercial Motors

Peter Murphy – University of South Wales

Lewis Evans – Owens Group

Owain Powell – Celtic Vacuum

Antonia Jones – Carmarthenshire County Council

Lindsay Atkins – Wales and West Utilities

Steven Pettiford – Wales and West Utilities

David Watkins – W.G. Davies Ltd

Gareth James – Swansea Council

Simon Griffin – Watts Truck and Van

Trevor Evans – GAP Group Ltd

Ioan Vantu – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Victoria Griffiths – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Stewart Short – Days Truck Centre

Josh Fenton (Secretary) – Logistics UK

Bethany Windsor – Logistics UK

Nichola Mallon – Logistics UK