

West Midlands Freight Council Minutes

Wednesday 3 May 2023, 09.00 – 12:00

Best Western Plus Windmill Village Hotel, Birmingham Road, Coventry, CV5 9AL

INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was chaired by Dave Rowland of Wincanton.
- The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
- New attendees were welcomed.
- Members were reminded about the competition law compliance guidance on page 4 of the Policy Report.

UK MODAL COUNCILS & SECRETARY'S REPORT

- Members received a report from the Road Council meeting held on 9 February 2023 and recent meetings of modal councils and working groups. Members were also updated on the progress of other issues including the driver CPC review, Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness and the Spring Budget

EXTERNAL PRESENTATION

Keith Budden, Head of Business Development at Cenex gave a presentation on the role of hydrogen in supporting the decarbonisation of logistics operations in the West Midlands and a discussion followed covering:

- How to ensure the needs of commercial vehicles are recognised and supported
- Cost of hydrogen for transport fuel compared with electricity
- Supplies of hydrogen for transport into the West Midlands
- Real time data to enable booking and enforcement, plus transparency of pricing
- Financing the infrastructure
- Residual values of conventionally fuelled vehicles
- Role of manufacturers
- Challenges for the UK market in relation to global markets, especially Asia and US
- Total cost of ownership (TCOs)

ACTION: DB to circulate slides and details of Low Carbon Event at Millbrook in September to members.

REGIONAL ITEMS

Members were updated on the Deeper Devolution Deal for West Midlands Combined Authority, Oxfordshire Weight Restrictions, the East Midlands Freeport announcement, the Melton Mowbray A606 Road Scheme and East Midlands Mayoral Combined Authority.

AGENDA ITEMS

A1 MOT TESTING FOR EARNED RECOGNITION (ER) OPERATORS

Views were sought from members on the Department for Transport (DfT) Call for Evidence that was released on 14 April 2023 and the proposals of changes to the testing scheme for ER operators.

Member preferences about the proposals was first for delegated testing, then increased time periods. They did not agree with reducing the test content.

Delegated testing would allow operators to sweat their assets and provide a buffer to allow testing to be done out of operational hours, rather than only during testing centre opening hours.

Several members that were involved at the trial stage of ER felt let down when the promise of delegated testing was removed. It was felt that delegated testing would ease the burden on the Driver Vehicle and Standards Agency (DVSA) and augment the agency's position on testing rather than be a detriment.

It was noted that other vehicle sectors are allowed delegated testing and members did not understand why the same cannot be applied to truck testing.

A2 COMPLIANCE STANDARDS FOR LIGHTER TRAILERS

Logistics UK does not have a policy on small trailer regulation and sought members views given that light trailers are a subject of interest to an APPG and minister.

Members commented that the good operators are the ones who attend Logistics UK's FCs. Members present report that any asset on the road is worthy of attention for maintenance. One member reported servicing their trailers annually and another believe this will be introduced. However, testing capacity, obtaining test slots and having the trailer off the road are issues for operators.

Before supporting the introduction of MOT testing for trailers, members would want to see the results of an impact assessment on the capacity of the testing network and what workshops were able to undertake MOT tests on trailers. They would also want to know what the content of the test would include, for example whether it would include a brake test.

There was general agreement that there should be more education and training before opting for legislation as a first step to improving the roadworthiness of light trailers. Members asked whether there was interest from service providers to cover light trailers, and many felt that trailers should be covered in the walk round checks.

A3 SMART MOTORWAYS

Members were asked about whether Logistics UK's position on smart motorways should be refreshed, following recent announcements and ahead of future road investment strategies.

Members were clear that they did not support Logistics UK's current stance of supporting the development of smart motorways as a means of achieving increased utilisation from existing infrastructure and to urge the government to view these as only a temporary solution to the lack of capacity on the UK's roads. West Midlands FC members said that Logistics UK should not be supporting Smart Motorways in their current format

It was pointed out that there are 5 different schemes in operation between the M1 and Stafford and that there should only be one type of scheme. When asked how the position should be updated, there was agreement that until stopped vehicle detection is much better Logistics UK's position should not support the roll out of Smart Motorways.

There was agreement that a lot more education through a mix of communication channels including a wide range of social media channels used by all ages is required to get the message across about how smart motorways work. There should be more focus on ensuring the matrix signs are updated quickly to foster more trust in their accuracy by drivers. It was noted that the original trial scheme on the M42 worked well, but the other schemes have not been rolled out to the same standard. However, it was acknowledged that if the M42 around the NEC did not have all lane running, it would be a log-jam.

A4 RETAINED EU LAW (REVOCATION AND REFORM) BILL

Members discussed the Retained EU Law Bill seeking to create powers to disapply retained EU law by 31 December 2023. Members were informed that changes to the scope of the Bill were imminent according to recent reports in the media, with the pieces of legislation under consideration now likely to be around 800 instead of 4,000 as originally listed.

The government has yet to set out what it intends to keep, remove or improve, therefore West Midlands FC members said they needed to understand what government is reviewing before responding to the questions about which regulations pose barriers to business, which ones are important to doing business or which ones should be improved. It was felt that there should be a proper consultation first to understand what government deems to be redundant legislation and what is 'at risk'. Logistics UK's position should be to call for more time to enable proper consideration of the options.

A5 LAST MILE URBAN LOGISTICS

Members discussed the development of a 'Last Mile' urban logistics policy position and covered:

- Changing approaches to urban logistics in the past few years
- Rowing back on the use of town centre micro hubs
- Trials of eCargo bike replenishment from vans in the Bristol area
- Security of unattended vehicles, weights of load and impact on riders
- Higher levels of investment in electric vehicles over cargo bike usage
- Contract conditions that demand zero emission vehicle usage

No different approaches between local authorities were cited by members.

Priorities for matters to raise with local authorities includes:

- Ensuring adequate charging infrastructure
- Micro fulfilment centres must have some accountability and recognition the process required for order fulfilment

ACTION: David Landy of Evri, offered to make introductions to their team working on the Bristol city trial

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Smart tachographs** – Members were asked about the impact of the implementation of smart tachographs. At a recent meeting with DfT, concerns were raised about occasional drivers.
- **HGV Road Levy Tables** – members noted that the charging tables are yet to be published.
- **UK Road Council West Midlands FC representation** – it was confirmed that Dave Rowlands, Karl Wilshaw, Colin James and Mark Smith would attend the next meeting on 8 June at the London Marriott County Hall.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 11 October, details to be confirmed

Meeting concluded at 12:15

ATTENDEES

Chairman

Dave Rowlands Wincanton

Speaker

Keith Budden Cenex

Members

Michael Collins	Simmons Transport Ltd
Sandra Cooksey	The AA
John Cowdell	A S Miles Consulting
Julie Davies	Amey UK Ltd
Anna Griffin	Culina Group
Michael Hughes	Hughes Driver Training
Alan Hurst	National Grid
Colin James	DPD
Andrew Knight	DX Network Group
David Landy	Evri
Avi Mann	TLP Recruitment
Nick Marshall	Cobley Transport
Linda McGlinchey	Sainsburys
Chris Paul	EH Smith Builders Merchants
Daniel Price	One Stop Stores Ltd
Phil Sessions	GAP Group
Mark Smith	Aldi Stores Ltd
Simon Summer	Continental Tyre Group
Clive Thompson	Birmingham City Council
Devon Walton	DPD
Karl Wilshaw	Travis Perkins

Staff

Denise Beedell	(Secretary) Senior Policy Manager
Josh Fenton	Policy Manager - Trade, Customs and Borders
Becky Martin	Senior Transport Advisor
Rob Saunders	Manager – Member Advice Centre
Laura Windridge	Membership Relationship Manager