

West Midlands Freight Council Minutes

**Wednesday 11 October 2023, 09.00 – 12:00**

**Nailcote Hall, Nailcote Lane, Berkswell, Warwickshire, CV7 7DE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* The meeting was chaired by Dave Rowland (DR) of Wincanton.
* The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
* 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 on 10 October 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.

Comments from members that some with large fleets will see a significant impact on costs in a short space of time from the new Direct Vision Standard. Josh Fenton (JF) corrected TfL statements circulating that had been made about how ‘industry’ had been consulted with, but the reality was that consultation had been largely confined to discussions with the trade association that represents the equipment fitters. Members commented that the technician shortage could make fitting the upgrades challenging.

Costs of £1500 were reported to take out the existing kit and replace with the new versions. Vehicles will also need to be out of service while the work is undertaken, costing business more money overall.

Re the Driving Licence Flexibility for AFVs announcement there was a discussion about how tachographs would work with this and timings on the implementation.

Dave Rowlands (Wincanton), Karl Wilshaw (Travis Perkins), Colin James (DPD), Mark Smith (Aldi Stores Ltd) and Chris Paul (EH Smith (Builders Merchants)) confirmed they will be attending the next Road Council meeting on 9 November.

**ACTION:** Denise Beedell (DB) to notify Chris Yarsley the names of confirmed attendees.

**REGIONAL ITEMS**

Members were updated on matters around and near to the Midlands, as well as the consultation by London Councils about PCN charges.

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

**BIRMINGHAM TRANSPORT PLAN OVERVIEW**

Oli Burnell (OB), Project Manager Transport Planning at Birmingham City Council provided a high-level overview of the Birmingham Transport Plan. A discussion followed which covered:

* The plan is for how Birmingham will manage change and growth in the years ahead.
* Links to supporting documents are on the slides.
* The plan is still being written so there is an opportunity to influence it. It was noted there is no truck icon on the cover.
* Fleet decarbonisation is focused on electric vehicle roll out, hydrogen bus trials, cargo bikes and last mile delivery pods.
* Concern about where all the traffic will go as the ring road is already at capacity.
* OB assured members that all areas will still be accessible, but routing may have to change.
* Downgrading of the A38 and its purpose is being considered.
* The Clean Air Zone (CAZ) boundary will remain as it is.
* Birmingham City Council is keen to continue engagement with logistics sector as the plan develops.

DR thanked OB and confirmed that members are keen to keep the dialogue going with Birmingham transport planners and urged them to keep communications flowing. A standing invitation to attend future meetings was made and the offer of immediate information between meetings can be sent to DB.

**CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON – 2041 NET ZERO STRATEGY**

Perminder Balu (PB), Head of Green Cities and Circular Economy and Gordon Telling (GT), Energy Manager, both from Wolverhampton City Council set out the City of Wolverhampton’s 2041 Net Zero Strategy development and how it will affect logistics providers. They discussed how operators can contribute information about their needs and aspirations to make sure the plan will be fit for purpose.

Discussions covered:

* Limited knowledge about Scope 1, 2, or 3 emissions reporting.
* Wolverhampton City Council is working towards net zero Wolverhampton authority operations by 2028 and for all activity in the city to be net zero by 2041.
* The focus is on electricity – rather than hydrogen – to be supported by battery storage.
* Looking to build a stakeholder working group.
* HVO trial involving the authorities’ fleet.
* West Midlands regional authorities are looking to take on the role of Regional System Operators (RSO) as part of the Ofgem shakeup. Local energy infrastructure plans are currently being developed.
* Information about where the grid connections and capacity are good in the city.

**ACTION**: PB to provide contact details for the grid connections project manager to DB for members.

* There are grants available to decarbonise premises and operations – need to register interest first. A free audit is part of the process, with 50% match funding for all businesses in the West Midlands.
* Public chargepoints and their accessibility for vans, and in the future lorries.

DR thanked PB and GT for their presentations, asked them to stay in touch and keep members updated with developments.

**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). Members said they had not seen much about the new rules, mainly because most use sub-contractors, although there was some awareness through updates in Logistics UK’s enews. No one at the meeting was involved in the BTOM, but recognised that they have customers that are so operators should be aware in case goods are rejected at the border. There was a hope that the supply chain directors are fully aware and have the right professionals involved. It was noted that SMEs may be more affected and members said there isn’t enough information about the practical implications for logistics.

There were no comments about how the new trading arrangements will impact on GB-NI trade, Republic of Ireland-GB trade, EU-UK trade and trading routes or how the new processes will impact the haulage and logistics industry.

**A2 PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

Members discussed their experiences of new parking regimes and restrictions.

**ACTION:**  Sarah Marsh, Ceva Logistics agreed to contact DB directly with responses to the questions.

Members pointed out this was not a new issue, and they were aware that new housing developments routinely impose restrictions on vans. It was now more important that vans were not restricted in order to access EV chargepoints at or nearby new homes.

There were concerns that restrictions make it less straightforward to decarbonise van fleets and whether restrictions could even be extended to servicing and delivery vehicles. Members also commented that having to park on neighbouring roads could have safety and security implications and cause tension with occupiers of nearby properties. Some members said they had a company policy to utilise home-charging for drivers when not on shift.

Members agreed that as long as vans parked legally and respectfully, there should be no restrictions for N1 class vehicles being parked on drives and residential roadsides.

**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 broad agreement that the role of Fleet Engineer has been diminished and there was support for the role of fleet engineer and how they have knowledge that can push back on unsafe cost cutting proposals. However, there were some caveats around whether it was necessary for smaller fleets (20-30 vehicles) especially if they outsource vehicles.

Of those businesses that employed a Fleet Engineer, members said the role was important but does not abdicate responsibility for Transport Managers managing their fleet. However, more technical knowledge brought a better perspective not just about the engineering side of things but also how to implement new regulation. There was uncertainty about what the needs will be with autonomous vehicles.

Re the proposed implementation of another statutory role within the operator licensing regime, there was no consensus about supporting the proposal and it was pointed out that the transport manager role has changed over the past few years.

**A4 SCHENGEN IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS**

Members were informed that the Department of Transport (DfT) is seeking feedback from logistics operators on the Schengen immigration restrictions. Members were informed that this is unlikely to be brought in until after the completion of the Paris Games next year and while Norway and Switzerland are included in the Schengen agreement, not all EU countries are signed up to it, including Ireland. The UK does not apply it; if it were to be brought in for the UK it would affect food imports.

There was no report of this affecting members, but several members mentioned it could significantly impact European tour operators who are already affected by the new rules. There was uncertainty about how mechanical breakdowns and illness would be managed within the limits.

No members had experienced enforcement action.

There was no comment about the impact on freight transported.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

* **Venue** – Members said the location was problematic due to HS2 roadworks; it was also felt that the room was not large enough. Members preferred the Best Western Windmill Village in Coventry.
* **Policy Report Changes:** Members were content with the move away from hard copies to electronic.
* **Direct Access to Driver CPC:** Request for employers to have more transparency about their drivers including direct access for things like drivers’ banked hours.

**ACTION**: DB to forward request to Chris Yarsley.

* **Dartford Crossing issues:** Several members have experienced issues such as problems taking Direct Debits and accessing statements, since the new administration came in. It was suggested that a corporate contact should be employed and, in the meantime, SR suggested contacting Dave Lakin at National Highways.

**ACTION:** DB to flag members concerns about the situation with the administration of the Dartford Crossing to Chris Yarsley

**DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Wednesday 31 January 2024, timings and venue to be confirmed.

Wednesday 1 May 2024, timings and venue to be confirmed.

Meeting concluded at 12:00

**ATTENDEES**

**Chairman**

Dave Rowlands Wincanton

**Speakers**

Perminder Balu Wolverhampton City Council

Oli Burnell Birmingham City Council

Gordon Telling Wolverhampton City Council

**Members**

Sandra Cooksey The AA

Albis DeRosa Whitworth Bros Ltd

Richard Ellithorne Builders Merchants Federation

Anna Griffin Culina Group

Alan Hurst National Grid

Colin James DPD

Gary King Sainsburys

Avi Mann TLP Recruitment

Nick Marshall Cobley Transport

Chris Paul EH Smith Builders Merchants

Daniel Price One Stop Stores Ltd

Jon Robbins Rivus Group

Mark Smith Aldi Stores Ltd

Tim Stephens Severn Waste Services

Simon Sumner Continental Tyre Group

Dale Trigg Severn Waste Services

Devon Walton DPD

Karl Wilshaw Travis Perkins

**Staff**

Katie Adams Policy Analyst

Denise Beedell (Secretary) Senior Policy Manager

Josh Fenton Policy Manager - Trade, Customs and Borders

Hannah Gowlett Membership Relationship Manager