

ScotFLAG Rural Freight Sub-Group Meeting

Room 2-D46, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Tuesday 14 March 2017

Note of meeting

Present:

Roland Stiven, Confor (Chair)
Chris Little, Road Haulage Association
Tony Jarvis, Highland and Islands Enterprise (by Telephone)
Jamie Smart, NFU Scotland
Derek Nelson, Forestry Commission Scotland
Anne Gray, Scottish Land and Estates
Pam Stott, Transport Scotland
Bob Bridges, Transport Scotland

Apologies:

Robin Pope, Highland Council
Chris MacRae, Freight Transport Association
Sally Thomas, Scottish Government Land Use & Biodiversity

Welcome and Introductions

1. Welcome and introductions made.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Review of actions from previous meeting

3. **Action 1: (Inform SCOTS of the group's work and issue invitation to join)** Done. Robin Pope confirmed as SCOTS representative. (Roland Stiven)
4. **Action 2: (Follow up with Scottish Rural College)** No success as yet. Will continue to follow up. (Roland Stiven)
5. **Action 3: (Develop a graphic to show interdependencies between group and other policies)** Done. (Pam Stott)
6. **Action 4: (Transport Scotland to facilitate a meeting between SG Planners and Roland Stiven)** On hold until after local authority election, preferably early summer. (Pam Stott)
7. **Action 5: (SG planning to keep group informed of progress and highlight potential overlaps to avoid duplication)** Linked to Action 4. (Campbell Gerrard)

8. **Action 6: (TS to develop Project Plan for group's work)** Ongoing. Update with meeting details and circulate. (Bob Bridges)
9. **Action 7: (Consideration of questions for inclusion in stakeholder survey)** Ongoing. Initial suggestions provided, further consideration to be given. (All)

Update on Membership

10. Key points were:
 - Riddell Graham, VisitScotland, added to the copy list for meeting papers.
 - Peter Clark, Scotch Whisky Association, seeking a meeting to discuss work of group.
 - David Cannon, Calmac, speaking to colleagues to identify most appropriate representative.
 - Network Rail approached but no response yet.
 - Patrick Krause, Scottish Crofting Federation, keen to be involved, but videoconferencing would be welcome.
 - Tony Jarvis was leaving HIE in April. Rob Clarke, Head of Policy, would join group until a permanent replacement is appointed.
11. Anne Gray joined the meeting.
12. There was a brief discussion about the need for rail freight interests to be represented on the group. It was noted that Chris MacRae was Head of Policy – Rail Freight and Scotland within the FTA. It was emphasised that Network Rail should be on the group from the perspective of safety at crossings. It was suggested that if the focus of rail's representation on the group was from a strategic standpoint, it was more appropriate for Transport Scotland rail freight colleagues to feed in to the group.
13. Anne Gray set out the respective interests of Scottish Land and Estates' members and the connections to the work of the group. It was suggested that Police Scotland should be represented to feed in on issues such as abnormal loads and road safety on an 'as and when required' basis.
14. There was a brief discussion about information or maps identifying lifeline routes. It was believed that there was no lifeline route map. It was noted that a Transport Scotland report into the economic value of the trunk road network had been published on 13 March. Some of the data from Hitrans' road study had been picked up in the TS report. Highlands and Islands Enterprise's transport connectivity around Argyll and Bute was also available.
15. An issue was raised about road restrictions being introduced to stop HGV rat runs. By implementing weight restrictions on certain roads, and forcing HGVs to use motorways, it can impact of farmers whose tractors are caught by the weight restrictions, but are not permitted to use motorways.

Online Survey

16. There was a discussion about the proposed questions for the survey. Key points were:
- Consider broadening the scope of the questions to include non-road infrastructure.
 - Avoid closed questions.
 - Avoid leading questions.
 - Invite suggestions for policy changes to improve current situation.
 - Consider amalgamating questions to gather information about businesses.
 - Include introductory paragraph to set out what we want to achieve and how data will be used.
 - Group questions for responses from hauliers, farmers etc.
 - Explore opportunities to promote survey in trade papers (e.g. Roadway, The Scottish Farmer etc.)
17. Pam Stott left the meeting.

Data Gathering

18. There was a discussion exploring the definition of 'rural'. It was noted that in 2013-14, the Scottish Government classed settlements of over 2000 residents as 'urban', with the terms 'accessible' or 'remote' being defined as being within or out with a 30 minutes driving distance. However, these definitions are complicated by small 'urban' areas in remote/rural areas.
19. The group was also advised that there are 3 key measures to inform the rural economy and the degree of importance to the economy. They are:
- Scotland's Rural College Report (SRUC) on the number of enterprises in rural areas.
 - Employment levels within the enterprises.
 - GVA/economic output of enterprises.

However, the data only exists for larger areas and won't provide a robust rural/urban comparison. It was suggested that to accurately evaluate the economic value of enterprises, the entire supply chain needs to be considered.

20. It was agreed that it would be helpful for SRUC, or a similar organisation, to collate existing data and carry out an analysis. An economic analysis is available for the food and drink industry in Scotland, but the group was unclear if a similar analysis of the fishing and aquaculture industries is also available.

AOB

21. It was agreed that a discussion of the policy tree table would be postponed until the next meeting.
22. In addition to mapping exit point data onto roads, consideration could also be given to entry point data for certain users. Such a mapping exercise could identify important roads and routes and inform stakeholders the group needs to speak to.
23. It was also suggested that consideration needs to be given to access to red diesel for the farming sector; maintenance of rural roads and issues of sat-navs re-routing HGVs onto inappropriate roads.

Actions agreed

Action 1: Circulate a link to the Rail Freight Strategy (RFS). (Pam Stott)

Action 2: Speak to Rail Freight colleagues to identify publications since the RFS. (Pam Stott)

Action 3: Invite Scottish Government Renewables Policy colleagues to feed in to work of the group. (Pam Stott)

Action 4: Prepare a paper to Transport Scotland/Scottish Government Resilience Groups to inform of work of the group and invite expressions of interest. (Pam Stott)

Action 5: Circulate the link to the Transport Scotland Economic Value report. (Pam Stott)

Action 6: Explore information sharing options (e.g. Knowledge Hub). (Bob Bridges)

Action 7: Feedback comments/suggestions to Roland Stiven on survey. (All)

Action 8: Continue making contact with SRUC to explore possibility of carrying out an analysis of existing data. (Roland Stiven)

Action 9: Source sectoral reports and circulate to group. (Tony Jarvis)

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 16 May (11:00-13:00).

20 March 2017