

nestrans

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND **FREIGHT FORUM**

**Hallmark Hotel
Farburn Terrace
Dyce AB21 7DW
Thursday 19 November 2015
17:00-19:00**

In Attendance:

Councillor Ramsay Milne (Nestrans Chair)
Eddie Anderson (ARR Craib/Nestrans Board/Chair of Freight Forum)
Derick Murray (Director, Nestrans)
Rab Dickson (Transport Strategy Manager, Nestrans)
Philip Smart (Aberdeenshire Council)
Paul Finch (Aberdeenshire Council)
Mark Wilkie (Aberdeen City Council)
Andrew Robb (AECOM)
Jason Moir (Dyce Carriers)
Richard Freeland (Freeland Freight Services Ltd)

Introduction

Introductions were provided. Eddie Anderson, the chair of the North East Scotland Freight Forum, welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that the venue for the Forum had been selected in response to interest at previous events to hold an event in Dyce. This Forum, the first since June 2014, provides an opportunity to provide an update on key developments taking place that will impact on the freight industry in the region.

General Update (Rab Dickson, Nestrans)

Rab Dickson provided a general update on major transport infrastructure improvements being taken forward in the region. Key committed schemes currently being progressed include:

- The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route – it was highlighted that evidence of the initial preparatory work for construction is clear across the region, with the scheme currently being planned for completion in winter 2017. A key associated element of the AWPR will be the locking in of benefits generated by the scheme.

- The dualling of the A90 between Balmedie and Tipperty is being taken forward as part of the AWPR contract. Work to deliver this scheme is already evident.
- The A90/A96 Haudagain improvements will be implemented following the opening of the AWPR.
- Work is well underway to address the constraint on the A96 at Inveramsay Bridge.
- Other key projects being progressed include the Dyce Drive Link Road, Third Don Crossing, Berryden/South College Street and the City Centre Masterplan.
- Other strategic projects include the dualling of the rail line between Inverurie and Aberdeen, the A96 dualling, and Nigg Bay Harbour.
- Additional schemes may be implemented using the Strategic Transport Fund.
- A bid is being prepared for an Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire City Region Deal.
- Overall, over the next 5-6 years, the North East will benefit from some £1bn worth of investment in the transport network.

AWPR: Construction Diversions and Closures (Philip Smart, Aberdeenshire Council)

Philip Smart provided an overview of existing information available on the Transport Scotland website in relation to key communications of diversions and closures associated with the AWPR construction programme.

Presently, information is released as the diversions/closures are confirmed. It was noted that there may be an opportunity to identify whether any hauliers have flows of vehicles comprising a high percentage of all traffic on a particular route that may invite earlier consultation on the impact of the diversion/closure on their operations. It was also agreed that it would be useful to distribute subsequent information releases via the Freight Forum as they are published, with the next instance of this to include instructions on how hauliers can themselves sign up for e-mail updates from Transport Scotland on diversions, closures and key milestones associated with the scheme, at the following link: <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/project/aberdeen-western-peripheral-route-balmedie-tipperty>

Consultation Towards Scotland's Rail Freight Strategy (Paul Finch, Aberdeenshire Council)

Paul Finch provided an overview of the current Scottish Government consultation into a high-level rail freight strategy for Scotland, which is running until 22 January 2016. This includes 18 draft actions for comment. A co-ordinated response is currently being considered by officers. It was noted that opportunities to co-ordinate the movement of recyclates by rail at a national level was among one of the key points being included within the response. The document can be viewed at: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/transport-scotland/rail-freight-strategy>

In addition, the Scottish Government launched a Clean Air Strategy on 4 November 2015. This includes three freight specific actions to:

- *Encourage each Local Authority with an AQMA to establish a Freight Quality Partnership/Forum and consider appropriate measures for improving air quality by 2017*
- *Encourage these partnerships to extend their activities to include environmental impact of freight transport*

- Consider “last mile” logistics, how these might work in city centres with Air Quality Management Areas.

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00488493.pdf>

Paul Finch also provided an overview of ECO Stars – the Fleet recognition scheme. This recognises hauliers for best operational practices, with an overall aim of reduced fuel consumption (and thereafter, emissions). Hauliers are assessed according to:

- Fleet composition;
- Fuel management;
- Driver skills;
- Vehicle specifications and preventative maintenance;
- IT Support Systems; and
- Performance monitoring and management.

It was noted that the larger urban authorities in Scotland (Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee), along with Fife, Falkirk, North and South Lanarkshire are currently signed up to the scheme.

Representatives of the Freight Action Plan Implementation Group have been invited to a meeting on ECO Stars and it was agreed by the Forum that it would be useful to learn more about the scheme and whether the local authorities in the North East should consider signing up to it.

It was also noted that other schemes are available including FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme) – which has a slightly wider remit to include safety, economical operations and lawfulness.

A96 Dualling (Andrew Robb, AECOM)

Andrew Robb provided a presentation on the work undertaken to date by Transport Scotland with respect to the dualling of the A96. He noted that this makes use of information publicly available on the Transport Scotland website. He highlighted:

- Transport Scotland is progressing a programme to upgrade the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen to dual carriageway standard by 2030.
- Dualling of the A96 will complete the dual carriageway network between all of Scotland’s major cities.
- The section to be dualled equivalent of 17x the length of the M74 Completion, 7x the length of the M80 Stepps to Hags project, and 3x the length of the AWPR.
- The preferred option for the Inverness to Nairn scheme (including Nairn Bypass) was announced in October 2014. A DMRB Stage 3 assessment is currently on-going.
- DMRB Stage 2 assessments will be undertaken for the Western (from early 2016), Central (from 2019) and Eastern (from summer 2016) sections, taking approximately 24 months for each section.
- Key project elements will consider a junction and access strategy, a non-motorised user strategy, a lay-by strategy and a rest area strategy.

Andrew Robb noted that some of the key considerations for freight associated with the dualling will be:

- What are the main issues currently encountered by hauliers on the A96?

- What are haulier views on the current truckstops on the A96?
- Is there anything that should be included in the A96 dualling programme that would make freight operations more efficient?
- Are there specific facilities that operators would likely wish to see included along the A96?
- Will the construction of the dual carriageway have any impacts on hauliers?

Feedback from the Forum noted the following issues with respect to the A96:

- The A96 is generally seen as a 'slog' for drivers conducting a full drive through from Aberdeen-Inverness.
- A key consideration is ensuring there is somewhere adequate for hauliers to stop to use facilities.
- The cafe at Ashgrove Services (between Huntly and Keith) has recently closed. Supermarkets on the route typically are used to provide drivers with refreshments.
- Congestion is particularly problematic in both Elgin and Nairn.
- End-to-end journey times are affected by a 40mph speed limit for HGVs – this will improve when the road is dualled.

It was highlighted that on-location discussions with lorry drivers would be a useful way to get haulier feedback on issues associated with the A96. Tore Services on the Black Isle was highlighted as a key location for fuelling, with the next most common fuelling stop being Inverurie.

Conclusions

Eddie Anderson thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the Freight Forum.

The Freight Action Plan Implementation Group will continue to keep abreast of key developments affecting the freight industry, and will continue to engage with the Freight Forum going forward.