

North East Freight Partnership**Date Held** **8th December 2015****Venue** **The Place, Sunderland****List of Attendees and Organisation**

John Bourn (Chair)	North East Combined Authority
Mike Page	AECOM
John Cram	North Tyneside Council
Keith Taylor	Northumberland County Council
Ann Wilson	Tees Valley Unlimited
Peter Walker	Railfuture North East
Martin Murphy	NECTAR
Tony Walker	NECTAR
Malcolm Bingham	FTA
Malcolm Dodds	RHA
Tom Zunder	Newrail, Newcastle University
Bruce Carnaby	Clipper Logistics
Martin Forster	Sunderland City Council
Andrew Lowery	TNT
Dave Bargh	Co-op
Colin Gransbury	A G Barr
Stuart Smiles	TBC
Richard Jones	WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff
Kim Farrage	North East Combined Authority
Michelle Elliott	Stockton Riverside College
Joanne Scott	Stockton Riverside College

Apologies

James Turnbull	Durham County Council
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Item Agenda 2: Minutes of last meeting

The Group accepted the minutes as a true reflection of the last meeting

Item Agenda 3 HGV Driver Apprenticeships

Michelle Elliott from Stockton Riverside College gave a talk on HGV driver apprenticeships and advised that there is a shortage nationally. The college is working with the Tees Valley LEP to assist in the provision of a logistics academy to address the shortage and will offer a career ready path.

The academy, which launched in November, will not just offer driving training but a whole host of courses which will hopefully ensure that new talent enters the industry. Currently, the majority of apprenticeships are with existing companies and are being trained up via this method.

It was noted that other sector specific apprenticeships are also being looked into.

Michelle also discussed Trailblazer Apprenticeships which the Government hopes will involve employers more to ensure their requirements are being met.

There is a major issue in relation to the amount of examiners and the capacity they have, therefore there are currently long waiting times in order to be assessed. Discussions are on ongoing to try and eradicate these delays.

There have been massive redundancies at SSI in the Autumn; the Government have pledged £3million for colleges and training providers to train people who have been affected from the redundancies at SSI. Examples include Category C & E training, CPC and refresher training. It was advised that there are no restrictions for where an employer is required to be located in order to access the funding.

The training is being done on a 1-1 basis and there have been 650 requests so far with 70 of these being requests for driver training.

Michelle queried whether, as part of the 16-18 logistic courses, would there be any logistic companies who attend this meeting who would be interested in being mentors. It was advised that if anyone is interested in being a mentor and/or hosting an event please pass your details on.

In the future, it is an ambition to have a regional hub where we will work with partners including training providers to access funding opportunities.

It was also stated that there are also ESIF monies which the Tees Valley LEP holds which are aimed at helping 19-29 year olds with training costs.

Malcolm Bingham queried about the requirement that drivers must have 2 years' experience from employers; is this something which has been raised and will this apprenticeship scheme help overcome this issue.

It was advised by Michelle that this indeed is still a problem which is why it is imperative that employers are involved from the outset.

Tom Zunder asked what plans the industry has to ensure that there is continued training and recruitment in this area as future public funding will be reduced. MB stated that a number of employers are investing in apprenticeships and beginning to have their own internal programmes, however the main issue that is encountered is retaining the apprenticeships; there are a lot of barriers including the cost of insurance which do need to be looked into.

It was also stated that the perception of the industry needs to be raised in order to promote this career to young people and, until this changes, there will be problems recruiting the numbers of drivers which are needed.

Agenda Item 4: FORS Update

Mike Page gave an update on FORS and stated that it has been 10 months since the scheme went to concession. It was very uncertain as to how the industry would react, however in the North East, there has been an increase in membership.

FORS supports freight operators as well as local authorities who wish to be in the scheme. Workshops are held each year with 20 being organised throughout this year which discuss issues including policy and procedures, vehicle and driver safety. The workshops are CPC accredited.

These workshops are well attended and if anyone would like to attend the next workshop, which is scheduled for January, they are most welcome.

MP advised that, on a national level, FORS membership has increased 38%.

It was noted that it had been raised that several companies had failed to book their audit and we need to look into this. Furthermore, some companies are considering leaving the scheme as they see no real benefits to their business. However, overall membership numbers in this region were increasing.

John Bourn advised that he would raise any issues or concerns with the FORS Governance and Standards Advisory Group and will report back at future meetings.

Item Agenda 5: A66/A69 Transport Study

Richard Jones from WSP/PB gave a presentation on the A66/A69 Northern Trans-Pennine study. The study, which was commissioned by Transport for the North, is one of a suite of studies which will inform the TfN Transport Strategy and WSP/PB are undertaking the study on their behalf. The remit of the study is to improve East-West connectivity.

RJ gave an overview of the objectives of the study and stressed the strategic importance of the study as well the strong environmental context. The study is currently at stage 1 which is looking at the current and future situations and any current or arising problems or issues.

Stage 2 will include developing and appraising options which have come as a result of stage 1; these options will be assessed using the overall study objectives and a short list will be produced.

Stage 3 of the study will include Outline Business Cases being prepared for each of the recommended options.

As part of Stage 1, previous studies of either road will be taken into consideration as well as a robust consultation exercise both on a 1-1 basis and attending interest Groups to gain stakeholders views and thoughts. There is also a Stakeholder Reference Group, a newsletter and various mailshots to ensure that stakeholders are aware of progress. The study has been split into study areas and links into other ongoing studies including the Northern Freight and Logistics Strategy.

MB stated that the Group recognises how important the A66 is and is surprised that the A68 has not been set within the scope of the study as it may be part of the solution.

It was advised that there has been underinvestment in the A69; it is essential that there are more and better opportunities to overtake. It was queried whether movements and where they end up were being monitored. It was stated that this was indeed being looked at.

RJ advised that current and future developments were being taken into consideration and the traffic impacts from these developments. A spreadsheet based modelling approach is being used.

MB stated that the A66 would be easier to upgrade and at the very least try and keep it open and clear when weather conditions worsen.

It was also noted that on the A66 there are a lot of bottlenecks through some of the smaller villages on the route. It would be splendid if Kirkby Stephens could be bypassed. Colin Gransbury stated that, if the A66 was to be upgraded, it would take a lot of pressure off the M62 especially in peak hours as a lot of drivers use the M62 then onto the A1 route.

John Cram asked whether cycling was being looked at as part of the study and it was stated that it was being looked at as part of the study.

It was advised that if anyone would like to speak to Richard in more details or had any comments which they would like to be considered as part of the study please pass your details to either Mike Page or John Bourn and they will ensure Richard receives them.

Agenda Item 6: Transport for the North

John Bourn gave a presentation in order to update the Partnership on TfN progress including summarising who was involved in it and their overarching aims. JB also advised that they were currently in the process of developing a multi-modal freight strategy.

Improving rail connectivity and capacity is a key objective for TfN.

Transport for the North was originally based around City Regions however work is continuing to occur to ensure all relevant partners are at the table.

All studies have very tight timescales associated with them. The freight and logistics study held a consultation event which was circulated via one of the Partnership's Freight Flashes. The next stakeholder event will be held in Leeds on 14th January 2016 and the details of this event will be circulated via Freight Flash. It would be beneficial if representatives from the private sector were able to attend.

Agenda Item 7: Task updates Year 11 Business Plan

Mike Page gave a presentation highlighting progress so far in 2015-16.

MP stated that a further CPC Safe Urban Driving course had taken place which 20 drivers attended. It was a mixture of class room based and practical exercise and we are looking to put on more courses funded through LSTF monies. These courses will be particularly focused on the A19 corridor.

It was advised that there had also been a request for the Partnership to investigate Illegal HGV parking in the Hexham area. A plan has been put together and survey work will begin in February to investigate this issue further.

MP noted that the freight awards are coming up and will be presented in the March Partnership meeting and requested driver nominations from companies.

Any other Business

Tom Zunder advised that there had been a 2017 call from the EU looking at small electric vehicles varying in size from the electric bike to a golf buggy and their development and would like to open it up to the Group.

Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 8th March 2016.