

Durham and Northumberland.

MW suggested that the Northern Freight Group and the North East Regional Assembly would be the appropriate forum for taking this forward. It was also suggested that a meeting should be held with the Tees Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) as this would be of primary importance to expand the website further across borders. This would fit with the Regional Spatial Strategy by breaking down the barriers and sharing best practice with others.

MW/FM

4 Electronic Information Point

DA informed the partnership of the progress made in relation to the feasibility for the provision of an Electronic Information Point (EIP). The principle for the trial was agreed in the 2005/06 action plan. A decision was taken by the partnership that the NT Newcastle Truckstop (Birtley) would be the most appropriate location to install the EIP. The EIP would provide live traffic information, advice on lorry parks, guidance on routes to key destinations and best practice information. The report identified the key ingredients in delivering a successful EIP and addressed compliance and H&S requirements. A copy of the report was distributed to all attendees.

It was recommended that a floor standing unit would be the most appropriate option. Some adaptations to the Tyne and Wear website would be required to make it compatible to the touch screen technology. The preferred supplier would be CyberD, who have EIP's in service areas in Scotland.

Following the closure of the Newcastle NT Truckstop, it was considered that the next best option would be the MOTO Washington Services. It was agreed that an application for the EIP should be made to MOTO, with a view to implementation within the 2007/08 action plan. Usage will be monitored and a survey carried out on reasons for using or not using the EIP. It was suggested that the EIP could also be used by the public for accessing traffic information, for example. MW stressed that MOTO would be required to fund provision of the phone line and ongoing maintenance.

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5 Assessment of Driver Rest Facilities

An assessment of driver rest facilities in Tyne and Wear has been completed. This has included surveys before and after the closure of the NT Newcastle Truckstop. Since the closure of the NT Newcastle Truckstop on January 23rd 2007 the utilisation for overnight parking at the Washington service has increased from 62% to 90% (over 60 vehicles). The closest driver rest facilities to Tyne and Wear are Exelby services on the A19, Durham Services on the A1 and Purdy Lodge on the A1.

A survey at NT Newcastle Truckstop was carried out prior to closure. Results from 12 interviews of drivers showed that secure parking was a priority for 83%. 75% preferred to stop at an Independent Truckstop, 50% did not think it was an issue to look elsewhere. 59% of the drivers were not sure where they would park, following the closure of the site. 17% said they would go the motorway services and 16% would park somewhere near Barton or Scotch Corner.

Observations were made as to the level of off site parking in Tyne and Wear. The local authorities were contacted to ascertain their knowledge of this type of parking in the area. This highlighted a number of areas where off site parking is a

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problem. A report will be available at the next Freight Partnership meeting.

Simpson Bros of Birtley have expressed an interest to accommodate some vehicles parking overnight. They had been approached by a car transporter company looking to park their vehicles at weekends as it is a secure site. Discussions are on going with Tom Wightman of Simpson Bros, Durham County Council and Tyne and Wear LTP team.

NC stated that more and more companies have multi depots nationally where drivers can park and trailers can be left on premises. Driver rest facilities are a national problem as they are becoming fewer and fewer. The Port of Tyne Logistics pay £100 per week for bays in Yorkshire whether they use them or not. There is collaboration by hauliers through the transport association where 50 to 60 members link up to assist each other. JJ stated that significant work is now being undertaken by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Highways Agency to address the problem of lorry parking at a national level.

MW suggested writing a letter to the DfT explaining the position in Tyne and Wear, using evidence from the audit.

MW/FM

6 Rail Freight in Tyne and Wear

The partnership role is to assist in the efficient movement of freight in Tyne and Wear. Previously the partnership has primarily considered road freight transport, however rail freight needs to be considered alongside this.

MP presented the baseline assessment of rail freight movements through Tyne Yard, with data taken from the "Freightmaster 2006" publication. Four rail freight operators cover the national rail movements.

Industry types in the region were discussed, with coal being the most significant movement at 53 movements per week through Tyne Yard. DW stated that the Port of Tyne moved 1.6 million tonnes in 2006 and it anticipated that this will increase to 2.5 million tonne in 2007. Consequently they are looking for additional rail paths to move the additional tonnage. The majority of coal imports are from Lithuania.

There is an imbalance in the movement north and south through Tyne Yard due to trains working in a loop. Some travel north on the east coast main line and travel south down the west coast mainline. Other rail movements were identified by the Partnership not included in the list were aluminium trains which had a destination in the Midlands/South Wales. Bauxite is also transported from Blyth to Fort William - it starts out as a part train load it goes via Tyne Yard and Millerhill Yard in Edinburgh.

MM stated that the final version of the Rail Utilisation Strategy was published the previous week and can be downloaded from the website. The Leamside rail link to Tursdale has not been promoted but the Boldon East Curve is being actively promoted. This would help re-route non-gauge dependant traffic via the Durham Coast route.

MM
FM

MM to present the recommendations of the RUS at the next partnership meeting. FM to issue written report.

7 Abnormal Loads Map

MP explained that a feasibility study for the production of an abnormal loads map for Tyne and Wear has been carried out. The map would provide updated and standardised mapping that depicts preferred routes by category for wide, heavy and height loads. The criteria to identify when a load is abnormal is as follows:

Measurement	For motorways	For all other roads
Load / vehicle width exceeds	4.6m	4.1m
Overall vehicle length exceeds	-	30.5m
Vehicle gross weight exceeds	130 tonnes	100 tonnes

Source: Highways Agency Figures Code of Practice:

Currently, local authorities operate off individual maps for each authority – a Tyne and Wear map would therefore facilitate collaborative working. Meetings have been held with the abnormal loads contacts at the local authorities, which have shown a high level of support for the production of a map. The production of the abnormal loads map has been identified as a task in the business plan for Year 3.

8 Priority Lanes

MW presented the Executive Summary from the priority lanes report submitted in February 2007 by JMP in partnership with The University of Newcastle. The study looked at the priority measures in Tyne and Wear on bus lanes and No Car Lanes. The report concluded that:

- The level of traffic is reduced when a No Car lane is introduced.
- No Car lanes demonstrated the quickest journey time for all vehicles.
- Of the different types of priority measure more accidents occur in association with the introduction of a No Car lane.
- Bus lanes have a lower level of lane contravention compared with No Car lanes.

MW indicated that some additional work may be required to provide a clearer steer on when it is appropriate to introduce different types of priority lane, with a view to rationalising the number of lane types.

MW

9 Town and City Centre Signage Review

MP explained that a study had been undertaken to audit the signage to key town and city centre locations for freight, including Wallsend, North Shields, Eldon Square, Gateshead, South Shields and Sunderland.

A report on the review will be available ahead of the next Partnership meeting. Recommendations include the provision of freight specific signing to the Bridges Shopping Centre in Sunderland.

FM

10 Year 3 Action Plan (07/08)

MW outlined the draft action plan for Year 3 (2007/08) – details will be provided to the Partnership when it is finalised.

FM

11 Date of Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting has been arranged at **Newcastle Civic Centre 7th June 2007 starting at 10:30**