



Department  
for Transport

## **Freight Council – Sixth Meeting**

**10:00 to 11:00, Tuesday 04 July 2023**

**Venue: Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

### **Attendees**

#### Ministerial attendance

- Richard Holden MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Roads and Local Transport), (Chair)

#### Co- Chair attendance

- Isabel Dedring, Global Transport Leader (Arup)

#### Member attendance

- Clare Bottle, CEO (UK Warehousing Association)
- Chris Seaton, UK Warehousing Association (Head of Policy and Public Affairs)
- Geraint Evans, CEO (UK Major Ports Group)
- Shane Brennan, CEO (Cold Chain Federation)
- Tom Southall, Executive Director (Cold Chain Federation)
- Jonathan Chatfield, Head of Railway Strategy and Policy (Rail Delivery Group)
- Daniel Parker-Klein, Director of Policy (Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport)
- Richard Smith, MD (Road Haulage Association)
- Declan Pang, Director of Public Affairs and Policy (Road Haulage Association)
- Amanda Zambon, Director of Policy (Association of International Courier & Express Services)
- Maggie Simpson OBE, CEO (Rail Freight Group)
- David Wells, CEO (Logistics UK)
- Robert Windsor, CEO (British International Freight Association)
- Katrina Ross, Policy Director (UK Chamber of Shipping)
- Christopher Snelling, Policy Director (Airport Operators Association)

- Mark Simmonds, Director of Policy & External Affairs (British Ports Association)

#### Department for Transport attendance

- Iain Forbes, Director Logistics and Borders
- Rosalind Wall, Director Motoring and Freight
- Dan Moore, Director General International Rail
- David Buttery, Director Roads Strategy
- Katherine Macdivitt, Deputy Director Road Freight Strategy
- Laura Marquis, Deputy Director Logistics and Supply Chains Policy
- Daniel Broadfield, Deputy Director Logistics and Supply Chains Analysis
- Bob Moran, Deputy Director, Decarbonisation Strategy
- Tim Lawson, Capacity, Airports, Planning and Engagement Team

#### Other government departments (OGDs) attendance

- Emily Woodburn, Deputy Director, Global Supply Chains and Economic Security, Department for Business and Trade
- William Richards, Head of labour markets and sectors strategy, Department for Education
- Ben Wilkins, Head of Labour Market Sectors Strategy, Department for Work and Pensions

#### Devolved Administrations attendance.

- Gary Cox, Director, Aviation, Maritime, Freight and Canals, Transport Scotland
- Sian Kerr, Director, Transport Policy and Planning, Northern Ireland – Department for Infrastructure

#### **Actions**

- 1) DfT officials to promote the People and Skills Delivery Group and its objectives across Government.
- 2) Richard Smith to follow up in writing, his thoughts on longer semi-trailers to the Minister.
- 3) Minister Holden's office to raise with Andy Lord, industry concerns about direct vision and devolved policy making.
- 4) Industry members to independently engage MPs to raise concerns on ULEZ and certain policies impacting industry.
- 5) Isabel Dedring and David Wells to have further discussions on the possibility of more regular council meetings.

## Minutes

### 1. Introductions and reflections

The Minister opened the meeting and introduced Isabel Deding as the Council's new independent co-chair.

The Minister highlighted his recent engagements with industry and across the United Kingdom to discuss how to continue to boost transport connectivity across the Union, to help grow our economy.

The Minister announced the publication of the planning call for evidence on freight and the planning system, which aims to gather evidence to support any future changes to national planning policy and planning guidance.

The Minister celebrated the progress of Future of Freight (FoF) priorities including:

- The announcement of the first-round winners of the Freight Innovation Fund (FIF). The industry support to year 1 SMEs in finalising their trial plans.
- The Freight Energy Forum, which is moving at pace and has received substantial interest from industry. The Forum, in addition to its core objectives, will play a key role in delivering the zero emission HGV infrastructure strategy.
- On other policy initiatives, HGV driver availability has stabilised after the DfT's 33-measures intervention to address HGV driver shortages. This included delivering 11,000 bootcamp places for HGV drivers, with bootcamp contracts extended for another year, and sustained increases to HGV driver testing slots. Feedback has been very positive.
- In addition, industry can expect £100 million government and industry investment in driver welfare facilities and lorry parking with assessments of initial bids for the Match Fund Grant reaching completion.

### 2. Decarbonisation

*The Minister gave a high-level update on decarbonisation in the following areas:*

- a) longer semi-trailers
  - In May, the DfT announced that operators can now make use of longer semi-trailers on roads. This change will save 70,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide from being released into the air. these trailers can carry a significant quantity of extra goods, with the proviso that no additional weight may be carried beyond the existing weight limits for standard semi-trailers.
- b) Zero Emission Road Freight Demonstrator programme (ZERFD)
  - Winners of the Zero Emission Road Freight Demonstrator programme (ZERFD) will be announced shortly. This will enable projects to start work to

get hundreds of zero emission HGVs, and their associated refuelling and recharging infrastructure deployed in the coming years.

- DfT officials are happy to provide a deep dive on the successful winning projects at a future meeting of this Council.
- c) Zero emission HGV infrastructure strategy
- In the last Freight Council meeting, members raised questions around charging infrastructure for battery powered vehicles, particularly HGVs. Government is committed to supporting and stimulating industry to make the switch to zero emission HGVs, and to do this, affordable, reliable, and accessible refuelling and recharging infrastructure is required.
  - As committed to in the Future of Freight plan, the Department is developing a zero-emission heavy goods vehicle (HGV) infrastructure strategy, which we will publish in early 2024. The Freight Energy Forum will play a major role in guiding the strategic aspect of this work and will regularly update the Council and seek their views.
  - Members should get in touch with Bob Moran (DfT Deputy Director, Environmental Strategy) and his team should there be any questions.

### 3. People & Skills

*The Minister gave a high-level update on People & Skills priority area.*

- This is a cross departmental priority, and we are working to deliver an action plan to tackle barriers such as a lack of awareness of career options and access to training.
- Government is committed to continuing our collaboration with industry to address the immediate and future skills needs of the sector that are key to protecting the resilience of UK supply chains.

*The Minister highlighted some achievements to date including:*

- Through flagship interventions like the Generation Logistics campaign, industry has been able to reach a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds to shift perceptions of the industry and boost awareness of job opportunities in the freight and logistics sector.
- In June, the Transport Secretary announced at the Road Transport Expo, additional government funding of £300,000 for the second year of the Generation Logistics campaign.

- There was collective agreement that it is vital to make use of our respective expertise and resources. For this reason, we are establishing a People and Skills Delivery Group that will report into the Freight Council.
- The group's first priority will be to work with the council and industry, to map out what our future skills needs will be and how we can strengthen our plans for the future workforce to meet these.

Action - DfT Officials to promote the People and Skills Delivery Group and its objectives across Government.

Isabel Dedring, Co-chair (ID)

- Queried how the council will interact with the People and Skills Delivery Group.

Laura Marquis, DfT (LM)

- Explained that the council needs to agree on the feedback mechanism between members and the delivery groups. These include the Freight Energy Forum looking at decarbonisation and Net Zero priorities, Freight Innovation Cluster Steering Board and the newly formed People and Skills Group.
- So, the question is for the council to collectively agree on the sequence of our quarterly freight council meetings and the meetings of the delivery groups. So that we are collectively happy with how we provide strategic steers to the groups as well as influence their work.

*The Minister opened the floor for comments.*

David Wells, Logistics UK (LUK) (DW)

- Thanked the government and DfT for the second year of funding for Generation Logistics.
- Pleased that industry has committed £150k since Wednesday 28 June and confident that they will likely match or exceed the budget they had this year, which was just over £900k.
- Support from government has made a substantial difference to the campaign and hopes this will continue.

Minister Holden

- Added that the Secretary of State (SoS) is very interested in the Campaign, which is why he personally led the funding announcement.

- Emphasised that Generation Logistics has overwhelming support, right from the top of the DfT.
- Following the SoS's recent visits to Japan for the G7, USA and Europe, other countries have also shown interest in this initiative. Delighted how this is being held up as a good example of industry and government working collaboratively to solve complex issues.

Richard Smith, Road Haulage Association (RHA) (RS)

- Agreed with DW's remarks on government support and welcomed the new funding, as it gives a lot of confidence to the sector.
- Regarding longer semi-trailers – this is welcomed by members who operate longer semi-trailers, however, there needs to be some flexibility on the bureaucratic process around it.
- We accept that safety is fundamental, however risk assessments may need to be reviewed.
- On the Zero Emission Road Freight Demonstrator programme (ZERFD) - we look forward to the announcement.

Minster Holden

- Asked RS to write to his office on thoughts around the longer semi-trailers.

Action – RS to follow up in writing to the Minister regarding longer semi-trailers

Clare Bottle, UK Warehousing Association (UKWA) (CB)

- Welcomed the funding and progress made on Generation Logistics, especially as it covers warehousing.
- Stated that the original FoF Plan had a lot of reference to warehousing, however it appears that the current Freight Council agenda is quite focused on road freight.
- Pleased to hear about the publication of the Call for Evidence (CFE). However, as the Levelling up and Generation Bill is well on its way through the Lords, there is concern that there may be limited opportunities to influence planning policy.

Iain Forbes, DfT (IF)

- Reassured the Council that this does not mean government will not continue to engage with industry on planning policy. The CFE was co-developed with colleagues in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

(DLUHC) so feedback will be used as a way to influence thinking about the national planning policy framework.

Minister Holden

- Agreed with IF and added that issues on a local level are not usually around warehousing. But it is important and should feature in future Council discussions.

Amanda Zambon, Association of International Courier & Express Services (AICES) (AZ)

- Raised concerns around devolved policy making, and its impacts at a national level. Transport for London (TfL)'s proposals for a direct vision standard were flagged as they will come into effect in October 2024, and will lead to significant cost for industry.
- The idea is to make roads safer for cyclists, but there has been no real-world testing which causes safety concerns, and industry has doubts about feasibility of the scheme. This could potentially cost industry £250 million to retrofit equipment.
- Appears to go against aspirations in the FoF plan regarding taking a holistic view of the UK freight network as an integrated whole.
- Requested that DfT explore this issue further.

David Wells, Logistics UK (LUK) (DW)

- Echoed industry concerns about the direct vision standard and other policies which industry struggles with. Such policies are largely motivated by politics and particularly mayoral elections. Anticipating any help from the Minister.

Minister Holden

Agreed to raise concerns with Andy Lord (Commissioner of Transport for London) before summer recess and for officials to engage with TfL regarding the FoF plan.

Action- Minister Holden's office to raise concerns about the direct vision standard with Andy Lord.

- Recognised problems hauliers - in particular those who do most of their work outside London - face when they occasionally have to do a job in London.

- The Minister suggested to the Council that David Wells and other industry partners could independently engage MPs such as Gareth Bacon MP to raise concerns on ULEZ if desired.

Action – Industry members to independently engage MPs to raise concerns on ULEZ and certain policies impacting industry.

*Minister Holden gave his final remarks and handed over to the Co-Chair*

4. Follow on discussion and actions from previous meeting.

*Isabel opened the floor for further reactions, comments, and inputs on discussions so far.*

Iain Forbes, DfT (IF)

- Highlighted that the Council's subgroups are a useful avenue to raise these types of issues. For example, the Freight Energy Forum (FEF) is being used as a sounding board for inputs on the zero emission HGV infrastructure strategy.
- Encouraged members to communicate preferred ways of working with subgroups.

*Isabel asked if members had any comments or questions on the back of written policy updates shared by officials prior to the meeting.*

Clare Bottle, UK Warehousing Association (UKWA) (CB)

- Our campaign to put more solar panels on warehouse rooftops is a key part of the alternative fuels agenda and the UKWA will be raising this at the FEF.

Daniel Parker-Klein, Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) (DPK)

- On the topic of rail electrification, DPK noted that within documents circulated ahead of the meeting there appears to be some pessimism about costing. Highlighted ongoing CILT work looking at small schemes which could make a dramatic difference on the ability to electrify rail network for freight. Will feed this update through the Freight Energy forum.

Dan Moore, Dft (DM)



- Affirmed that there have been conversations with CILT. DfT is considering such schemes.

Amanda Zambon, Association of International Courier & Express Services (AICES) (AZ)

- Welcomed the CFE.
- Added that government's policy on the management of aircraft noise and the use of night flight restrictions because of nearby residential development often can be used to justify night flights being curtailed. This causes challenges for next day delivery and questioned whether anything is being done to look at the application of planning controls near airports, as it has been raised at the aviation-noise working groups.
- Offered to feed that into the planning call for evidence.

Tim Lawson, DfT (TL)

- Recognised Amanda's point on the impact of residential developments around airports and asked Members to feed all views into the call for evidence so that they can be considered.

David Wells, Logistics UK (LUK) (DW)

- Logistics UK is looking for support from government for changes in the international greenhouse gas protocol. More of our members have invested in biomethane for their trucks as an interim measure before switching to electric.
- Under current proposals however, our members would have to record that as though they were using fossil fuels.
- Wrote to Jesse Norman MP (Minister of State for Decarbonisation and Technology) as this is very significant and our members have made huge investments in biomethane while they prepare to go full electric potentially.

Bob Moran, DfT (BM)

- Confirmed that the DfT has received the request for support and that the low carbon fuels team have advised the Minister (Jesse Norman MP). The Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP) is managed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the Department for Energy Strategy and Net Zero (DESNZ) is leading the UK Government's engagement on any changes.

*Emily Woodburn (EW) of DBT gave a presentation on the Critical Import Strategy that the DBT Global Supply Chain and Economic Security Directorate is producing on behalf of government.*

- Keen to engage members of the council as they provide essential services in order for the country to run. And get initial thoughts on some the areas covered by the strategy.
- Members will have also received the survey that DBT is producing and would appreciate industry's input. This will be followed by a number of business engagements in July and the publication of the strategy in autumn.
- The survey will touch upon areas such as barriers industry face and any vulnerabilities within supply chain resilience, actions being taken by industry leaders and finally what more members would like to see between industry and government working together.

*EW introduced herself and team and proceeded to go through the slides.*

Maggie Simpson, Rail Freight Group (RFG) (MS)

- Added that industries may have their institutional definitions of goods they deem critical but happy to give feedback in the DBT survey.

David Wells, Logistics UK (LUK) (DW)

- Echoed Maggie's point that members may have different opinions of what they deem critical. Therefore, understanding what is meant by "critical" is imperative before speaking to our members.
- Asked for a copy of the presentation.

*Council members agreed to reach out to EW with specific questions that they think may be worthwhile to make the survey more useful.*

Isabel Dedring, Co-chair (ID)

- Asked if DBT is planning wider workshop briefing sessions that people should be aware of to encourage dialogue.

Emily Woodburn, DBT (EW)

- There are currently ongoing discussions with Nusrat Ghani MP (Minister of State for Industry at DBT) through a series of Ministerial roundtables but also open to wider dedicated discussions.

Amanda Zambon, Association of International Courier & Express Services (AICES) (AZ)

- Reiterated that resilience issue regarding their sector is the lack of capacity for night flights in the South East in particular. Members have had to rely on ad hoc slots.
- Being able to fly overnight is an operational necessity for our sector as it is the only way to get a next day delivery or urgent critical items. Therefore, this a huge challenge for our sector.

## 6. Reflections/FC vision and Wrap-Up

Isabel Dedring, Co-chair (ID)

- Offered time to chat with members offline on how to make sure the Council has maximum impact.
- Proposed a longer face-to-face meeting on how to maximise pace and momentum on areas that members want to prioritise.

*ID opened the floor for members to give their thoughts on how the council is currently organised and how that might be reframed.*

Maggie Simpson, Rail Freight Group (RFG) (MS)

- Suggested that DfT could spread meetings out to keep issues live as there are currently a cluster of them.
- Secondly, the Freight Council is a cross modal forum, however this meeting's agenda appears to focus broadly on roads. It is important to keep the Freight Council agenda cross modal as originally intended.

David Wells, Logistics UK (LUK) (DW)

- There should be more regularity in terms of meetings. There is too long a gap between Freight Council meetings. There is a need to maintain momentum to make an impact.

Isabel Dedring, Co-chair (ID)

- Responded that this can be achieved by making the groups very effective to allow the Freight Council to keep its meetings quarterly or there can be in-between quarterly meetings at which the Minister does not need to be present.

Action – Isabel and David Wells to have further discussions on the possibility of more regular Council meetings.

Declan Pang Road Haulage Association (RHA) (DP)

- Echoed DW's points around momentum. There should be a clearer focus from delivery groups e.g. People and Skills Group, what can the council agree on as their deliverables, setting up T-Levels in logistics, heavy vehicle mechanics, apprenticeship funding bans etc. Collectively, how can we pull together resources to work across government to achieve something tangible.

Isabel Dedring, Co-chair (ID)

- Agreed that it is important to think about outputs and outcomes as well as timings. Need to establish what areas the Council focuses on in the next 18 months.
- There needs to be a framework of what we would like to achieve, from which we can build on.
- In our next meeting, we should have further discussions in terms of ways of working.
- The secretariat and ID are always happy to receive comments and inputs offline.