
Argyll Timber Transport Group (ATTG) and Strategic Timber Transport Funding - Briefing Note for Economy Thematic CPP Group

1.0 Argyll Timber Transport Group (ATTG)

- 1.1 The ATTG is a voluntary forestry group consisting of partner organisations including Forestry Commission Scotland, Argyll & Bute Council, private forestry sector, local hauliers, Community Council's and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.
- 1.2 The ATTG is one of 7 regional timber transport groups in Scotland and is recognised within the industry as being one of the most pro-active and successful groups in the country.
- 1.3 The full ATTG meets twice annually with smaller Sub-Group meetings occurring monthly between Council Officers and the ATTG Project Officer and Chair.
- 1.4 Many forest areas in Argyll are served by minor roads which are not suitably constructed to accommodate large volumes of heavy vehicles and as such, timber haulage can have an impact on rural roads and on the communities that live close to haulage routes.
- 1.5 One of the key aims of the ATTG is to encourage and improve industry and council liaison with regards to managing timber haulage on fragile road networks whilst sustaining an economically viable timber industry in Argyll.
- 1.6 The role of the ATTG has become particularly significant recently following extensive freeze/thaw damage suffered to the local road network as a result of two severe winters, which has highlighted the fragility of the roads and the need for timber traffic management to sustain the roads essential for access by the wider community.
- 1.7 The ATTG has also championed best practise and the use of technology such as central tyre inflation (CTI) which has resulted in local hauliers making considerable investments to their fleet with a view to sustaining the local road network.

2.0 Agreed Routes Map (ARM) and Preconditions

- 2.1 The ARM (Appendix A) is the primary document used to indicate the status of the public roads in the region and their capacity to sustain standard fully loaded haulage vehicles. The map is configured to indicate Agreed Routes as well as other routes designated in order of capacity as "Consultation Routes", "Severely Restricted Routes" and "Excluded Routes".
- 2.2 Agreed Routes are generally the Council "A Class" network with a few exceptions for areas of limited structural capacity and also other lower class routes where substantial strengthening has been carried out.
- 2.3 The majority of B and C Class routes are designated as Consultation Routes, where generally the capacity is sufficient to cope with regular usage but where some seasonal restrictions may be required.

- 2.4 As part of a recent review of the ARM several routes have been re-designated as “Severely Restricted” in the aftermath of the last two winters and the extensive frost damage. In these cases pre-conditions will be implemented as part of the felling license process to mitigate the recurrence of this damage e.g. no haulage in December, January/February or during periods of frost/thaw and specific agreed frequencies associated with the particular capabilities of the route at other times.
- 2.5 Excluded routes are generally those where the structural capacity of the route is limited or there are alternative routes of a suitable nature to take traffic.
- 2.6 Consultation between landowners / harvesting agents and the Council is essential prior to any planned timber haulage operations, on routes at risk of excessive damage. The Council is a statutory consultee in the felling licence process and recently revised protocols to encourage the agreement of timber transport management plans to mitigate the effects of heavy haulage on these routes prior to the formal application process.
- 2.7 Following this, there should be further consultation on all but Agreed Routes immediately prior to harvesting and haulage operations commencing, to engage all interested parties.

3.0 Strategic Timber Transport Funding

- 3.1 The Strategic Timber Transport Scheme is grant funding allocated by the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) for projects that help facilitate the sustainable transport of timber in rural areas of Scotland for the benefit of local communities and the environment.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government have allocated £3m to STTS this financial year although £1m of this is allocated for Timberlink (timber shipping service). Beyond 2012 it is not clear if STTS funding will be continued.
- 3.3 In 2011/12 £825,337 of STTS monies has been awarded to 4 projects in Argyll representing 43% of the total STTS allocation for the year.
- 3.4 STTS funding has also been used to attract additional monies for projects in recent years. For example £650k of STTS monies was matched with £450k from HITRANS and £75k from the Council to enable upgrades to be undertaken on the B836. This development took from 2006 to 2010 to plan and implement.
- 3.5 In February 2010 out of a £500k pot, ATTG secured £110k towards frost damaged roads in Cowal, on the B839, B828, and B8000. In January 2011 the FCS released £600K of winter damage funding and ATTG were awarded £176K for the Council to undertake resurfacing works on the A819 and C38 Kilmichael Glen.
- 3.6 Another source of funding which has been utilised in the past is the Scottish Governments Freight Facilities Grant (FFG). This was used to fund sea transport development in Argyll prior to the Timberlink project. The Scottish Government have made £2m of FFG monies available for projects in 2011/12.
- 3.7 ERDF and SRDP are also funding streams which have been used for timber related projects (e.g. in forest haul route construction and minor public road spend 2003 – 2006 in a combined project totalling £2.4M) in Argyll.

4.0 ATTG Project Officer

- 4.1 The ATTG Project Officer post is jointly funded (£30k pa total) by stakeholder contributions and the STTS. A key role of the ATTG Project

Officer is to liaise with stakeholders regularly, identify potential projects and then support and develop STTS/other grant applications. Given the success of the ATTG in accessing external funding in recent years it is considered essential that funding for the Project Officers post is retained moving forward.

- 4.2 In practice the Argyll Project Officer is very much in liaison with the forest industry and the Council, and can help advise, administer and monitor the implementation of mutually agreed timber traffic management plans to help sustain both the sensitive roads, and the forest industry, where these routes are essential to the industry and the rural community.

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