

ANGUS COUNCIL

ROADS COMMITTEE

22 NOVEMBER 2001

TAYSIDE TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP
TIMBER HAULAGE – AGREED ROUTES

REPORT BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF ROADS

ABSTRACT

This report informs the Committee of the work carried out to date by the Tayside Timber Transport Group and details the proposed categorisation of Angus Council's road network for the purposes of Timber Haulage.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee agree:-

- (i) to note that the Tayside Timber Transport Group has been established and meets on a regular basis;
- (ii) to note the progress of the Tayside Timber Transport Group to date;
- (iii) the categorisation of Angus Council's road network for the purposes of timber haulage.

2 INTRODUCTION

Throughout Scotland it is recognised that increasing timber production from private and state forests is going to have a significant impact on the rural road network, and in particular on C Class and unclassified roads. Recognising this problem, the Tayside Timber Transport Group was established in May 2000.

The overall objective of the Group is to provide a forum for the forestry/timber industry to work with Local Authorities and other government agencies to address timber transport issues. The aims of the Group are generally:-

- To organise and fund timber transport surveys.
- To agree Preferred Routes Maps.
- To address individual issues where appropriate.
- To encourage best management practice for haulage operations.
- To alleviate local community concerns about timber haulage.

The Group includes representatives from the following companies and organisations:

- Perth & Kinross Council
- Angus Council
- Forestry Commission
- Forest Enterprise
- Timber Growers Association
- Forestry Contracting Association
- United Kingdom Forest Products Association
- Scottish Enterprise Tayside

The Group meets quarterly and Angus Council is represented on the Group by the Acting Director of Roads with occasional attendance on an ad hoc basis by a Development Plan Officer from the Planning and Transport Department.

3 **POLICY CONTEXT**

The approved Tayside Structure Plan 1993 includes Rural Development Policy 13:-

“To seek to identify the likely demands on roads and bridges investment due to expected increases in timber harvesting traffic and to consider the implications for the road network when commenting on any major planing proposal”.

Rural Development Recommendation 5 recommended to the Secretary of State that:-

“Future financial allocations should fully reflect the investment required in the road network to support the forecast increased extraction of timber in Tayside to support the expansion of tree planting in the region as envisaged by Government Forestry Policy”.

There are currently no grants or specific capital allocations available for road improvement, maintenance or repair required as a result of timber harvesting traffic.

4 **DETAILS**

Within Scotland there is to be a doubling in the quantity of timber harvested over the next 20 years. The implications of the impact of increased timber traffic on minor public roads are potentially significant, emphasising the need for early planning to avoid future problems.

In order to quantify the problem and determine which roads were likely to be most affected an extensive survey of private and state forests has been undertaken to establish forecast timber extraction volumes and to ascertain the likely routes that will be used in order to get the timber from the forest to the mill. A non-confidential database of extraction forecasts was compiled by the Timber Growers Association and the Roads Authorities subsequently determined the designation of individual roads required for timber transport over the next 8 years. The roads required for timber extraction have been designated into one of three categories, namely “agreed”, “consultation” and “excluded” routes.

Agreed Routes are those which can be used for timber haulage without restriction in accordance with the Road Traffic Act 1988. In Angus all A and B Class roads and some C Class roads have been designated as Agreed Routes.

Consultation Routes are those roads which are recognised as being key to timber extraction but which are not up to Agreed Route standard. Consultation with the local roads authority is required and it may be necessary to agree limits of timing, allowable tonnage, etc, before the route can be used.

Excluded Routes are those roads which should not be used for timber transport in their present condition. These routes are formally restricted under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to protect the road from damage. Consultation with the roads authority is required to explore alternative routes.

In Angus the following roads are subject to weight limits and have therefore been designated as Excluded Routes:-

Bridge Weight Restrictions

Route No	Road Name	Weight Restriction
C45	Newton – Lunan-Montrose Road (Weight Restriction on Lunan Water Bridge) (OSGR 687 516)	16T
U401	Burnside of Inshewen Road (Weight Restriction on Horniehaugh Bridge) (OSGR 414 619)	16T
U428	Dunlappie Road (Road Closed to all traffic at Dunlappie Bridge) (OSGR 593 680)	Road Closed

Environmental Weight Restrictions

Route No	Road Name	Weight Restriction
C72	Tannage Brae, Kirriemuir	3T
U367	Myreside Road, Lunanhead	3T
U474	Waulkmill Road, Inverkeilor	3T
U475	Arbikie Road, Inverkeilor	3T

A 1:125,000 scale map has been drawn up showing the proposed designation of Timber Haulage Routes in Tayside and a copy has been placed in the Members

Lounge for perusal. It will be observed that the majority of C Class and unclassified roads have been designated as Consultation Routes.

There has already been considerable discussion and negotiation over the designation of individual roads in order that the forestry industry can move timber as cost effectively as possible with the minimum impact on the road network.

It should be noted however that timber transport vehicles which conform to the Construction and Use Regulations (up to the current gross vehicle weight limit of 44T) can legally use any public road which is not subject to a weight, width or height restriction.

It must be stressed therefore that the draft agreed routes map for the Tayside area represents a voluntary agreement between the local authorities and the forestry industry, and is not legally binding. However, the forestry/timber industry recognises that the local authorities have minimal resources to repair and maintain the rural road network, and it is in no one's interest for the roads which the industry itself relies on to be damaged by timber haulage. In turn, the Council recognises that the forestry industry requires support to help it compete in a world market, and the local roads authority has a duty to maintain the public road network and to make it available for the safe passage of vehicular traffic. The draft agreed routes map reflects this mutual recognition and aims to ensure that the industry and local roads authority continue to work in close partnership to help the forestry sector contribute to the economic viability of rural Scotland, while minimising the potentially detrimental effects of timber haulage on the local roads network.

With the forward planning and framework provided by the timber extraction survey and the Timber Haulage Agreed Routes map in place the Acting Director of Roads will be able to work closely with the forestry/timber industry to mitigate as far as possible the damaging effects of timber haulage on the local roads network and the potentially adverse effects of this heavy traffic on local communities.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance and the Director of Planning and Transport have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8 CONCLUSION

The Tayside Timber Transport Group provides a forum for the forestry/timber industry to work with the Local Authority to address timber transport issues.

The forward planning framework provided by the timber extraction survey and the Timber Haulage Agreed Routes map should help to mitigate the potentially detrimental effects of timber haulage while recognising the importance of the forestry sector to the economic viability of rural Scotland on the basis of mutual voluntary agreements.

R W McNeil
ACTING DIRECTOR OF ROADS

NOTE:

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

RWM/JSG
8 November 2001
REPORTS/timber.haul