

Cumbria and Northeast England Timber Transport Group

Record of meeting

Meeting: Sub-Group
Date: 26-May-2022
Purpose: Discuss the planned timber haulage operations at Ennerdale
Present: Mike Yerbury, Chair
Victoria Upton, Cumbria County Council
Max McLaughlan, Forestry England
Cameron Smith, Euroforest
Apologies: James England Voluntary Project Officer
James Houghton, Cumbria County Council

Background

A sub-group of the main Cumbria and Northeast England TTG (CNETTG) was convened following contact from the Parish Council representing the local community close to Ennerdale. The reason for the contact was in response to planned timber harvesting and haulage works that are due to take place at Ennerdale Forest later this year. The forest is owned and managed by Forestry England as part of the State Forest and the purchaser and commissioner of the timber harvesting and haulage works is Euroforest Limited.

The tree felling works are planned as a result of the disease, [*Phytophthora ramorum*](#) being identified within the forest and found to have killed a large number of Larch trees.

Consultation

Since planning the timber harvesting and haulage operations at Ennerdale, it was confirmed that Forestry England had carried out detailed consultation with the local community and that the output from this was contained within their own Public Engagement document which is available on the internet ([see here](#)). This consultation was extended by 5 weeks to allow for additional feedback to be considered.

Upon review, the document highlights the concerns raised by the local community and the responses provided by Forestry England.

Felling, extraction and haulage works

Since 2019, Forestry England have felled and dispatched more than 26,000 tonnes of standing timber from Ennerdale Forest as part of their sustainable forest management programme. These works had taken place without significant issue and that the planned works would be managed no differently.

In relation to the planned works, it was confirmed that Forestry England have commissioned Euroforest to fell two areas of diseased Larch trees, details broadly as follows:

- Area 1 – 2,000 tonnes
- Area 2 – 6,500 tonnes

It was confirmed that these operations will commence mid-June 2022 and will likely last 6-7 months. The public car park at the entrance to Ennerdale Forest will be closed for 3 to 4 weeks after the busiest period of the school holidays to enable safe working around this area. Exact dates for the completion of the works are difficult to predict given many of the uncertainties that exist with the complexities of timber works, which include:

- The potential that additional areas of Larch trees will be found to be diseased; if this were to be the case, it is likely that these would also be planned for removal as part of this operation.

- Site based environmental constraints which can affect timescales of the on-site operations.
- Timber market demand; fluctuations in the demand for the Larch roundwood can impact on the rate of timber dispatch from the forest.

Timber haulage

Following felling and extraction, the timber will be dispatched from roadside using 44 tonne (gross vehicle weight) 6-axle articulated timber lorries. These lorries carry a payload of between 25-28 tonnes of timber and will run between the forest site and a broad number of roundwood wood processing customers.

The plan is for timber haulage to take place from Monday to Friday, but not on weekends. Lorries will aim at all times to run outside of the school drop-off/pick-up times of 08:15-09:00 and 15:00-15:45.

Route

The plan is for timber haulage vehicles to use the following route:

- Exit the forest on the U4027 to Croasdale.
- Continue on the U4028 from Croasdale to Ennerdale Bridge.
- Head north on the C4004 from Ennerdale Bridge joining the A5086 south of Lamplugh Cross.

All of the roads mentioned above have been classified as AGREED ROUTES by the CNETTG.

Following the contact from the Parish Council, the proposed timber haulage route was inspected by all parties present at today's meeting and all confirmed that:

- The roads were of good structure for carrying 44 tonne (GVW) timber lorries.
- There were generally adequate places for others to pass within a reasonable distance should two vehicles meet on the road(s). The Timber Transport Route from the A5086 to the Bowness Knott Car Park uses both C Class and unclassified roads, and these are currently agreed routes. The geometry along most of the route length provides space for two vehicles to pass either within the main running lanes, or within passing places/widened stretches of road. There are however, some limitations due to the fact this is an unclassified road, and there are natural pinch points, though mostly where speeds are low, and space for passing is available within a reasonable distance. Intervisibility is generally good between passing places/widened areas to allow larger vehicles to pass. Notwithstanding this, there is also one section where intervisibility is reduced and road widths do narrow, including passing areas and this section will be monitored more closely, and reviewed both during and post timber transport movements.
- Signage for local residents and visitors, informing them of the works and use of the road by timber haulage vehicles is currently limited. Improvements could be made with more frequently located signs.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings as detailed above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The CNETTG believe the level of engagement with local communities has been proportional and therefore see no reason to reclassify the proposed timber haulage route from Ennerdale Forest, through Croasdale and then Ennerdale Bridge. To this end, it will remain an AGREED ROUTE.
- The CNETTG will not impose a restriction on the total number of timber haulage vehicles that can use the route on any given day (Mon-Fri). It was agreed however, that weekends would be avoided as would running between the school drop-off/pick-up times.

- Forestry England, with approval from Cumbria County Council will erect roadside signage to inform local residents and visitors about the use of the road by vehicles that will be heading to/from the forest.
- Timber haulage vehicle drivers will be made aware of the sensitivities relating to the haulage from Ennerdale Forest and will drive according to the conditions. The drivers who will be operating on this route are experienced, highly skilled and very familiar with the route.
- Forestry England will continue to monitor the forest operations and timber haulage works and will keep the CNETTG well informed of any changes to their plans.