

TOUGH ROAD AHEAD IN BID TO DECARBONISE TIMBER LORRIES

***The Press and Journal* (Inverness, Highlands, and Islands)**

29 Oct 2022

Paul Boobyer

HEAVY LOAD: The current annual timber harvest from Scottish land is around seven million tonnes, which will need to be transported by netzero vehicles within the next 13 years.

Targets to decarbonise road freight to avoid the need for new diesel HGVs by 2040 were announced by the UK Government earlier this year – and Scotland has an even more ambitious target of 2035.

The current annual timber harvest from Scottish land is around seven million tonnes, mostly moving on 44-tonne lorries on public roads, all of which will need to be transported by net-zero vehicles within the next 13 years.

New infrastructure installations such as EV charging and hydrogen fuelling points will be a requirement to achieve this.

To explore the hurdles and opportunities, Transport Scotland has established a Zero



Emission Truck Taskforce, chaired by Scotland's Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth MSP, comprising of leaders across manufacturing, energy, finance, and road haulage and logistics. The aim is to identify the necessary measures and milestones to achieve zeroemission trucks.

Green truck technologies are moving at a rapid pace. Developments have mostly been in EV technology to date, and some are now market-ready, but hydrogen trucks and EV/hydrogen hybrids are currently being trialled in various countries.

For the transition to netzero trucks to take place, charging or refuelling infrastructure will be required either in a depot or at appropriate points en route. It is likely that in many cases, both will be necessary.

The initial focus for infrastructure across Britain is inevitably on the main freight routes – motorways and major trunk roads. However, it will also be necessary to ensure sufficient recharging and refuelling provision for rural freight, including timber transport movements.

The UK and Scottish governments' commitment to phase out diesel-powered HGVs by 2035-40 means energy demand for timber transport and possible locations of EV charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure will need to be considered in the context of geographical challenges posed by transporting timber in remote locations.

The truck taskforce is encouraging trials that focus on net-zero infrastructure and the Timber Transport Forum (TTF) has initiated a pilot study that aims to provide data on where this infrastructure might be located along key timber transport routes in rural Scotland.

The project being done for the TTF will initially focus on the Argyll and Borders timber transport group regions. A pilot study of these two areas should provide information that can be extrapolated to other regions.

The scope includes exploring energy demand for timber haulage over the period to 2045, and its distribution over the pilot area; quantifying the demand needing to be serviced by new refuelling/ recharging infrastructure; and identifying suitable locations for the infrastructure.

This work will lead to a detailed report with a map displaying timber haulier/ processor locations and haulage routes. There will also be details of the power output needed per refuelling/recharging location, and the space requirement for different locations.

Paul Boobyer is project manager for the Timber Transport Forum.