

Review of Central London Freight Quality Partnership

Executive Summary

The Central London Local authorities co-fund the Central London Freight Quality Partnership (CLFQP) with an equivalent financial contribution coming from industry members. While local authority funding is confirmed on an annual basis, no in-depth reviews of activity or its operation have been completed in recent years. Although no specific concerns had been raised with regard to the operation or management of the CLFQP, a high level review was initiated in July 2013 to ensure that it continues to meet the expectations and needs of the local authority funding partners.

The contribution of industry partners to the effectiveness of the CLFQP cannot be emphasised enough. However, as this review was focused on local authority views, industry partners were not consulted for this report.

From the local authority perspective, this review identified:

- CLFQP is an effective and efficient method for engaging with the freight industry
- Overall satisfaction with the areas of work covered by the partnership
- That updated terms of reference need to be developed
- Enhanced procedures are required to enable the CLFQP to agree positions to enable the partnership to engage with relevant organisations e.g., Department for Transport or Transport for London
- A review of the method by which the CLFQP identifies, commissions and delivers research activity is required
- Overall partnership representation, especially local authority attendance, needs reviewing to maximise the value of the engagement.

1. Background

- 1.1. Freight Quality Partnerships (FQPs) were established in 2006 by Transport for London (TfL) to enable the freight industry and local stakeholders to have a forum for discussion and engagement to address common issues and challenges.
- 1.2. Five FQPs were established including West London, Thames Gateway, South London, Brimsdown and Central London.
- 1.3. Membership of the Central London freight quality partnership (CLFQP) is comprised of service providers: freight transport, distribution and service companies and their industry associations, including the Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Federation of Small Businesses and The Brewery Logistics Group, as well as the central London local authorities.
- 1.4. The CLFQP is hosted by University of Westminster and chaired by Prof Michael Brown, administered by Mr Dennis Lynch.

- 1.5. TfL's financial support for FQPs was withdrawn in 2010. Following discussions between the CLFQP, industry and the local authorities an arrangement was agreed whereby industry contributions would be match-funded by the central London local authorities. For the 2013/14 year, the total funding for the FQP was £18,000 comprising £9,000 from industry and £9,000 from the Central London Sub-Regional Transport Partnership¹ (CLSRTP).
- 1.6. The vision for the CLFQP is contained in Appendix 1 however there are no currently agreed terms of reference for CLFQP. The CLFQP was originally formed to:
 - Develop a vision and action plan to reduce freight impacts
 - Improve loading and unloading facilities and enforcement
 - Identify appropriate opportunities for out of hours deliveries
 - Work to minimise external costs imposed on the freight industry
 - Encourage better use of the transport network
 - Help business to develop their environmental agenda in relation to freight transport and servicing.

2. Review

- 2.1. A review of the CLFQP was initiated in July 2013 to assess local authority views on the CLFQP and any areas for improvement.
- 2.2. Responses to the review were sought and received from TfL and all partners.
- 2.3. No industry comment was sought as this reviewed was to assess local authority views only. The CLFQP Secretary has indicated that industry partners will be engaged separately prior to the conclusion of their existing funding arrangements.
- 2.4. Sections 3 – 6 detail the questions and key findings.

3. Do you consider the CLFQP to be an effective and efficient method for engaging with the freight industry for central London?

- 3.1. In general, the respondents considered the CLFQP to be an effective and efficient method for engagement with the freight industry. The benefit of bringing together the diverse stakeholders and enabling open discussion was recognised.
- 3.2. While the informal nature of the meetings was seen as a strength in enabling discussion, there was some comment that a lack of focus can sometimes limit its effectiveness.
- 3.3. The CLFQP was recognised as providing:
 - Good engagement with industry partners and representatives (including informal consultation)
 - A forum for sub-regional discussion on freight matters

¹ The CLSRTP comprises of representatives from the Cities of London and Westminster, London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

- Best practice and knowledge exchange (borough to borough)
- Independent and knowledgeable facilitation of freight matters
- Opportunity for collaborative sub-regional freight projects and research to be undertaken
- Lobbying – achieving appropriate recognition of Cycle SuperHighway impacts on the freight and servicing sectors

3.4. Key comments made included:

- *“useful for engaging with the road freight and logistics industries prior to or (where appropriate) instead of a formal consultation (e.g., on a proposed order) and can, in many instances, be more effective in engaging the right people than a statutory consultation”.*
- *“the partnership has been regarded ... to be a pragmatic and straightforward means to understand the pressures and needs of the freight and logistics industry”.*
- *“The FQP has been effective in tackling some of the cycle superhighway issues and raising the profile of freight in the design teams”.*

4. Are you happy with the composition and structure of CLFQP (including areas of work, frequency of meetings, and representation from partners)?

Areas of Work:

- 4.1. Given the current broad range of discussion and activity that occurs as part of the CLFQP, **there was overall satisfaction with the areas of work covered by the partnership.** A number of respondents did note that the scope can range from issues on a localised (borough level) through to sub-regional, pan London, national and European level. While this was seen as beneficial, a re-balancing of time in favour of matters of sub-regional importance would be helpful.
- 4.2. It was also noted that some partners may struggle **with keeping issues focused on matters pertaining to central London.** While their concerns are valid, this can lead to discussions outside of the remit of the partnership. While industry members were not included in this research, the comment was made that the breadth of coverage could lead to frustration from industry partners if, due to a lack of time, their issues and concerns were not being sufficiently addressed.
- 4.3. In addition to providing a forum for engagement and discussion, the CLFQP has also had a role in communicating with external bodies such as the Department for Transport, or responding to consultation with the Mayor of London or TfL. However, due to the broad nature of the membership, **it was noted that due to the difficulties of achieving unanimity, opportunities to respond or communicate concerns to external agencies may be missed.** Reviewing this aspect and, through suitably caveated document, it may be possible to ensure that the very real concerns identified by the CLFQP can be communicated as appropriate.
- 4.4. With regard to the commissioning of research, comments were also made that some improvement to the process could be beneficial. While the CLFQP has a clear role in problem identification and definition, translating this through to the scoping and procuring of research studies may be less effective. For example, the existing steering groups are effective for their purpose, but it was felt by some respondents to be less successful as project boards. The CLFQP operates on a minimal funding basis and so external funding is generally sought. **Given resource constraints, some queries were raised as to whether or not the partnership was the right vehicle to be undertaking research activities.**

Frequency of meetings

- 4.5. The current frequency of meetings was seen as appropriate with the recognition that due to local authority resource pressures, it was sometimes difficult to participate fully in the partnership. With greater clarity of purpose, it would enhance the ability of some local authorities to prioritise attendance.

Partner Representation

- 4.6. While noting the impact of other work pressures on local authority representation, it was identified that for the CLFQP to operate effectively, a higher level of participation from the LAs is required. Poor attendance can not only limit the discussion, but may also raise concern in the industry partners of the value of their participation. The observation was also made regarding the areas of responsibility that officers may represent e.g. parking, strategy or environment.

- 4.7. Industry representation is seen as good, although effort should be made to ensure that key sectors are also included such as construction. Local authorities are concerned with freight movements across the entire spectrum from on road safety through to deliveries and kerbside allocation for which engaging with the whole road freight sector is important.

5. Do you support the continuance of the CLFQP as presently operated?

- 5.1. There was a high level of support of the continuation of CLFQP, however this was qualified by seeking improvements in the areas mentioned above.
- 5.2. Key observations made included that while *“Freight and servicing traffic accounts for a large market share of central London’s road traffic yet arguably not enough attention is given to tackling issues relating to these movements”*.
- 5.3. With the increasing pressure on the road network from both a general capacity perspective as well as loading and servicing areas, the importance of a forum in providing a opportunity for free and frank discussions was appreciated.
- *“it is a good source of down to earth advice about how deliveries are undertaken on the Council’s streets and what potential transportation and parking solutions can be developed”*.

6. Other comments

- 6.1. The consistency of personnel from the local authorities, as well as in the CLFQP’s management, was seen as valuable in fomenting trust and stronger relationships between the groups.
- 6.2. The quality of the CLFQP’s management and administration was also highlighted.
- *“Professor Brown’s chairmanship and Dennis Lynch’s managerial support is proficient and ensures that there is an independence from the usual Local Government/TfL control of such meetings”*
- 6.3. While the University of Westminster’s role was endorsed, their responsibility for the partnership does preclude them taking a more active role in any research that may be required.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. Feedback from the local authority members clearly endorse and support the continuation of the CLFQP.
- 7.2. The impact and value of the freight industry to London is well established. However, as an industry and stakeholder, there is a recognition that it is not properly incorporated (outside of the transport teams) into local authority planning and processes except when responding to adverse occurrences affecting either road safety or residential concerns. The CLFQP enables a relatively consistent voice to be made to strengthen this engagement.

- 7.3. Through taking a more positive and pro-active approach to issue identification and resolution there is the potential for substantial innovation to occur. This may help address the many challenges affecting the freight industry and integration with wider environmental, economic or regulatory issues.
- 7.4. While the overall aims and objectives of the CLFQP are broadly supported, it has been clearly identified that a refresh is warranted.
- 7.5. The development and approval of new terms of reference is essential. Particular consideration should be given to maintaining the overall current breadth of discussion while addressing the:
- Key aims and objectives
 - Overall scope of activity e.g., information sharing, networking, lobbying and project delivery
 - Delivery of projects – perhaps activity should be restricted to issue identification and scoping before transferring to a third part for delivery e.g., CLSRTP
 - Balancing of borough, sub-regional, pan London, national and European issues
- 7.6. As a key stakeholder group, the ability of the CLFQP to respond to consultation or raise matters formally is important. Discussion with all partners on how this role can be fulfilled effectively is essential to prevent a lack of consensus limiting (silencing) the partnerships' ability to engage.
- 7.7. The nature of sub-regional partnership working does require the partners to prioritise and participate effectively. While recognising the work pressures on local authority officers, it is important that regular and effective representation by officers occurs. This would also include the identification of designates when the lead representative is not able to attend.
- 7.8. Similarly, the overall partnership composition should be assessed to ensure it is reflective of industry and borough aims and objectives. Consideration should also be given for representation from major landowners or 'customer groups' such as Business Improvement Districts.
- 7.9. The role of the Chair and University of Westminster is endorsed, however this does preclude their ability to undertake projects or research.
- 7.10. Transport for London should also consider how pan-London issues are dealt with to ensure industry is effectively engaged at the correct geographical level.

For further information or questions about this review, please contact

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Appendix 1

Central London Freight Quality Partnership Mission Statement

The Central London Freight Quality Partnership vision is to establish central London as a leader in city logistics practice. The partnership will bring all stakeholders together to develop a common understanding of freight and servicing issues; to encourage and promote innovative solutions for servicing and the delivery and movement of goods; and to show what can be achieved to improve freight and servicing at the heart of a complex world class city.