

Davies Turner aims to drive a greener supply chain with longer trailers

Davies Turner, the UK's largest independent freight forwarder, is aiming to take advantage of changes to the allocations of longer semi-trailers under the existing 10-year UK government trial to grow its fleet of 15.65 m trailers in a move that could take 170 inter-branch feeder trips off Britain's roads annually.

Philip Stephenson, Davies Turner joint managing director, is keen to make use of the opportunities to expand the forwarder's fleet of longer semi-trailers, which will help to 'green' the company's domestic supply chain.

He says: "The two 15.65 m long trailers in which we invested some time ago have already saved a good many trips and resulted in fewer vehicles on the motorway thanks to their much greater capacity. We expect to be allocated at least four more and would really like a further six more to service our overnight feeder network connecting Cumbernauld in Scotland's Central Belt, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and Dartford."

The Department for Transport (DfT) has decided to open up the decade-long trial of longer semi-trailers, which started last year as 1,250 of the initial 1,800 vehicle allocations remain unused. Expanding the trial will allow operators who were unsuccessful in obtaining longer trailer allocations first time round a second chance to take part in the trial, and encourage those like Davies Turner who were successful first time round to further expand their fleets.

Each of the 2 m longer trailers has a 120 cu m capacity compared to the 105 cu m capacity of a similar specification 13.6 m trailer, an increase in capacity of 15 percent per unit.

The trailer's 4.75 m overall height (fully compliant since the overnight feeders are only used on UK motorways) and double deck configuration creates an optional second floor that allows the company to make best use of the internal height of the trailers without risking damage to any cargo which would otherwise be overstowed.

When loaded to capacity, which is always the case on these busy feeder services, Davies Turner's six 15.65 m trailers could take as many as 100 feeder trips off the UK's roads over a 12-month period, the company estimates. An expansion to ten semi-trailers could see some 170 feeder trips removed annually from the country's road network.

Mr Stephenson says: "We will use our fleet of longer artics on routes involving volumetric goods. These are cargoes that often cube out and the additional trailer length will allow us to take advantage of the extra six euro pallets of floor space now available per journey.

"The 15 percent increase in capacity is a straightforward win-win for us and our clients. Our transport managers will be able to cut 15 out of every 100 journeys we now undertake with the smaller, shorter semi-trailers. This will translate into practical benefits for our clients from more efficient haulage of their goods at the same time as we make more effective use of our assets, boosting our drivers' productivity on a day-to-day basis.

"Ultimately, the winner is the wider environment as our already fuel-efficient tractor units are used in a much greener manner."

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