

Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative

Minutes of Steering Group Meeting

25 September 2007

Development & Enterprise Gateshead Civic Centre

Present:

Nick Clennett (Chair)	Gateshead Council
Ray King	Project Manager
Jeremy Forsberg	Communications Manager
Danny Barker	Data Support Officer
Neil Mackay	Northumbria Police
Peter Morris	Highways Agency
Gary Macdonald	Newcastle City Council
Neil Thorpe	Newcastle University
Sia Mahmoodshahi	South Tyneside Council
Debbie Orr	Gateshead Council (Finance)
Andrew Farquhar	HMCS
Alex Bennett	Northumberland Fire & Rescue
Dave Simpson	Tyne & Wear Fire & rescue
Kevin Ridpath	North Tyneside Council

Apologies:

Northumberland County Council
Sunderland City Council
Nexus

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate account of proceedings.

3. Matters arising

The majority of partners have now signed the SLA. Those partners who are still to sign will investigate their current position with their legal teams.

An executive summary of the NHS Research Project was distributed to the group, with the final report completed in weeks. The final report will be circulated to the group prior to the next meeting in January.

AB asked if the report takes into account the personal costs of those people involved in road collisions. The report only takes into account the costs savings to the NHS through camera activity.

NC requested for discussion purposes that questions be raised before the meeting so that items could be included in the agenda.

4. Project update

Annual casualty and speed reduction performance indicators.

The partnership was set several performance targets to achieve throughout the year. These headline figures were distributed to the group. At all new sites across the board and existing mobile sites the targets for casualty reduction were met. However, existing fixed sites and existing red-light sites are not meeting the reduction targets. The main reason for this was due to these cameras being installed often without meeting any collision criteria and some were installed purely for political or pro-active reasons.

The group discussed what actions could be taken with sites that were not meeting the casualty reduction targets. Analysis of these sites has already been carried out but GM requested that analysis be carried out into the spread of collisions along each site also as it is unlikely that the collision will be centred at the camera location. Engineering solutions could then be looked at for up and down stream of the camera itself.

Action: DB

Quarterly performance indicators.

In Q1 the partnership averaged 620 days a month enforcement at fixed sites, almost double the target, and 312 hours a month enforcement at mobile sites, slightly less than the target due to higher levels of court abstractions.

The project office dealt with 14 speed complaints; 11 were concluded successfully and 3 are awaiting survey results. No new public concern sites were identified as none met the criteria.

First quarter project activities.

The installation of 22 fixed vehicle activated signs was complete.

New camera sites were identified and visited to ensure they were suitable for camera enforcement.

A level-crossing project with Nexus was initiated. The project will look into the possibility of using red-light cameras at crossings where there are currently no barriers.

5. Finance update

06/07 final position.

The final claim for 06/07 is currently with the auditors and the deadline for being signed off is Friday 28 September. There has been some contention over an invoice for £20k from Newcastle University. These problems are currently being rectified.

First quarter expenditure.

The partnership was under spent by around £20k in the first quarter. However, not all partners submitted claims and it was noted that if accurate financial forecasts are to be produced all partners must submit claims promptly for each quarter.

GM enquired what costs could partners claim. Staff time spent on camera work, signage at camera sites, and maintenance at camera sites (including power supplies) could all be claimed back from the partnership.

08/09 budget forecast.

A breakdown of the predicted costs for 08/09 was distributed. Both revenue and capital costs were at the same level as agreed in the SLA, however, some of the subtotals were different due to the changing of headings and improved forecasting.

A discussion concerning the £254k capital cost on IT took place. This cost is for the implementation of the PenTip system within Northumbria Police. This system is being rolled out nationally. The cost represents 50% of the total cost for Northumbria Police in line with the workload associated with the work done on behalf of the partnership. The police have always planned to implement the system, however, as yet it is not completed and no implementation date has been confirmed. The group agreed to make a decision on the matter when further information from Northumbria Police was gained.

SM asked why the surpluses for 08/09 were significantly lower than 07/08. RK confirmed that these levels were stated and agreed in the SLA and that 08/09 was always planned as a higher spending year due to the police IT costs. The group agreed the revenue expenditure for 08/09.

6. Policies for approval

New fixed camera installations.

The issue had recently been raised concerning the installation of new fixed and red-light camera housings at sites that did not meet the partnerships selection criteria. Examples of possible red-light sites in Newcastle and Sunderland were given. The partnership has no control over what local authorities choose to spend their capital budgets on.

A paper was distributed that discussed the possibility of increasing camera housings without increasing the number of cameras the partnership operates. Currently the partnership operates to a 4:1 housings to cameras ratio and the paper discusses that this could be increased to as much as 6:1.

There was various concerns raised by the working group in installing cameras that do not meet the selection criteria and it was recommended that any such cameras should be excluded from the partnerships performance indicators. The group agreed that a consistent approach was needed across the force area and would recommend not to change the policy for selecting new camera sites. Northumberland had previously stated their wish to discourage the installation of such cameras and so the group's recommendation would also be put forward at the next Tyne & Wear LTP steering group meeting.

Action: NC

Overt use of cameras.

A paper was distributed discussing the points of moving from overt to covert enforcement at camera sites. The paper was written on the back of Med Hughes' announcement that covert enforcement is an option to partnerships and a study carried out in New Zealand. There is no evidence to show that region-wide covert enforcement would bring about and greater road safety benefits and covert enforcement would lead to higher ticket numbers and therefore higher revenue costs. Changing the partnership's policy on enforcement would contradict all previous road safety messages it had given. NM stated that Northumbria Police wish to carry on using overt enforcement at camera sites.

The fire & rescue services have no wish for the partnership to go down the route of covert enforcement as this goes against their road safety policies. The group agreed that covert enforcement would not take place and that the policy of overt enforcement would continue.

7. Communications update

Partnership re-branding.

In line with the new funding arrangements and wider road safety remit, around 75% of partnerships across the country have changed their name due to the unattractive image associated with cameras. The new name for the partnership was agreed as 'Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative' and this had been fully consulted with all partners at working group level.

Campaign update.

The Road Respect is still on going and gathering a lot of momentum in various media sources. The campaign moves away from cameras with the emphasis on various aspects of road safety other than simply speeding. Road shows have taken place throughout the summer across the region. Each local authority area has received at least two shows each and around 50k people have attended them.

Using the Road Respect Charter the campaign has also been moving towards the private sector in an effort to engage with employees. Many business and organisations have shown great interest in the charter and it will be distributed in October.

A series of radio advertising has been launched recently targeted primarily at young drivers. Metro and Galaxy radio stations are running with the campaign and have provided a substantial amount of free value added media as well as giving their full backing.

In the coming months a schools competition will be launched aimed at 6th form colleges around the region. Students will be asked to submit various road safety messages through film, posters, and still pictures with prizes awarded

to the chosen winner. This should provide a lot of free creative work from a target audience.

JF informed the group that he now has full use of a van, decked out with various Road Respect branding along with a road safety simulator and plasma screens that all local authority partners are welcome to use.

Publication of annual report.

Headline casualty data for the annual report was distributed. These showed reductions throughout the region. This years report will be far more streamlined as it has become apparent that people were not reading it through and mainly skipping to various chapters. There will be no hard copies, only PDF and HTML versions to be distributed electronically, keeping the cost of production to a minimum.

KR asked if the Road Respect campaign included the safety of road workers as North Tyneside had various big roadwork projects coming up in the near future. JF was happy for the campaign to be used in anyway providing it was for the good of road safety and was willing to produce various press releases and awareness for the safety of road workers at any up coming schemes.

RK requested that the partnership be involved in any road work schemes as early as possible if local authorities wish for camera enforcement at them. Unlike the Highway Agency, local authorities would not be charged for enforcement at road works as laid out in the SLA.

NM queried if the partnership had any plans to publicise highest speeds caught at a site in light of the recent story. JF currently involves several key media sources when high profile cases come to light and will continue to do so.

8. Any other business

AB informed the group of the release of a corporate DVD in which JF featured promoting road safety.

NC requested that if there are any issues partners want the working group to investigate then inform either himself or RK so that they can be added to the agenda.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is planned for 29 January 2008 at 2pm. Room details to be arranged soon.