

Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative

Minutes of Working Group Meeting

18 September 2008

Gateshead Civic Centre Development & Enterprise

Present:

Ray King	Project Manager (Chair)
Jeremy Forsberg	Communications Manager
Danny Barker	Regional Road Safety Data
Neil Thorpe	Newcastle University
Kelly Wilson	Gateshead Council (Finance)
Paul Flemming	North Tyneside Council
Alan Bawn	Northumberland County Council
Karen Morris	HMCS
Neil Fraser	Northumbria Police
Bryan Mullan	Newcastle City Council
Saladeer Hussain	LTP Core Team
Rohail Ahmed	LTP Core Team
Derek Ord	Newcastle City Council

Apologies:

Neil Frier	Gateshead Council
Denise Newman	HMCS
Kevin Wellden	Northumbria Police
Allan Calvert	Sunderland City Council
Sia Mahmoodshahi	South Tyneside Council
Peter Morris	Highways Agency

Danny Barker has been seconded to the North East Road Safety Resource until March 2008.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

3. Matters arising

Public Concern Site Certificates:

RK noted that Sunderland, Newcastle and South Tyneside had still not signed site certificates. PF and DO said they would address the issue. DB will resend certificates to remaining partners. RK re-iterated the importance of

signing certificates to ensure the police can enforce with confidence that the site meets all legal criteria.

Action: DB, PF, DO, SM

Tyne and Wear LTP Road Safety Action Plan:

RA mentioned the four key action plans for the LTP were in process with Access and Air Quality approved. Congestion Reduction and Road Safety will be out shortly. All will feed into two year delivery plan which has a November deadline to be finalised in December 2008.

4. Project issues & progress

Performance Indicators

Fixed cameras approved in 2004 show an 84% KSI reduction as opposed to those approved on to the scheme in 2003, which show a KSI reduction of 43%. Many of those approved in 2003 were historical cameras, many of which were approved without a collision criterion. RK pointed out that the performance indicators for historic cameras are based on maintaining reductions in collisions when compared to the baseline. However, where the camera was not approved using a collision criterion, this is not necessarily achievable.

Mobile camera sites show a reduction in collisions as follows, according to the year they were introduced to the scheme:

- 2005 - 47%;
- 2004 - 83%; and
- 2003 - 72%.

Red-light cameras show the following:

- Red light cameras installed in 2004 are showing a KSI reduction of 100% or in real terms 7 less KSI casualties
- Red-light cameras approved in 2003 show a KSI increase of 14% or in real terms 1 more KSI casualty. Some of these sites include historic cameras that were commissioned prior to the formation of the partnership with no data led criteria for their installation.

AB queried the reason behind the baseline figures on historic cameras and why data from three years prior is not used as it is with all other cameras. RK said the issue was due to the cameras approval for use as part of the camera programme in 2003, used the same baseline year that all cameras going through approval used and it was for consistency that the baseline for those cameras was maintained for that time frame. In order to address the baseline issue for historic cameras the performance indicator and the way it is measured is to be reviewed.

Action: RK

Deployment and Activation Levels Report

Fixed cameras achieved deployment levels above those agreed in the SLA. However, mobile enforcement deployment levels were down. The low levels were believed to be a result of staffing issues and higher than expected court abstractions due to high profile road work enforcement. Activations per hour peaked in the summer in line with school holidays. Mobile enforcement peaked in January to March, which coincided with enforcement at the road works on the Coast Road.

There were around 70,000 activations. Activations per hour are down from 1.12 in 03/04 to 0.24 in 07/08 at fixed sites and 19.6 in 03/04 to 8.3 in 07/08 at mobile sites. RK highlighted that increased compliance was a positive sign that cameras were having the desired effect of slowing drivers down. RK also said that there will still staffing issues resulting from a move to civilianisation of enforcement.

A1 Road works enforcement

The Highways Agency was planning for major road works on the A1 where it crosses the east coast railway line in Gateshead. This was planned for October, but has been postponed until April 2009. The HA and contractors have asked for speed enforcement of the roadworks using average speed detection. Funding for the cameras, back office hardware and software, and staff training will be provided by the HA and contractors. All hardware and software will remain with the FPU upon completion of the works, but the enforcement cameras will not. This means that the back office infrastructure will be available should average speed cameras be used by the partnership.

RK mentioned that both Newcastle and Gateshead has expressed interest in using average speed detection in 20 mph limits in the future. NF (NP) mentioned that it was police policy, based on ACPO guidance to not enforce mandatory 20 mph limits because they should be self enforcing. RK pointed out that ACPO guidance refers to 20 mph zones and not 20 mph limits. DO also highlighted the difference between the concept of zones and limits. DO said zones must be self enforcing, but this is not necessarily the case with 20 mph limits. NF (NP) said he would get clarification on the police's position.

Action NF (NP)

Review of Working Practices

Outsourcing of the Fixed Penalty Unit would not be carried forward due to national issues including the issue of an emergency contingency, which may require FPU staff and data protection, and ownership issues.

Civilianisation is proceeding with the intention of replacing one vacant and one imminently vacant PC position with civilian enforcement staff.

HMCS has had many changes recently and has made a £56k saving through internal efficiencies.

Red route signage will not be carried forward due to the HA's elimination of the signs on the A1. However, route enforcement will be carried forward on a trial basis along 25 km of road on the A696 just north of Ponteland. AB said this was a good route because of the widening of the road and increased grasscrete along the road, which would be useful for mobile enforcement parking. JF will run a communications plan to highlight the route and enforcement issues.

No further capital projects will be carried out on VAS, but local authorities may wish to continue in their own areas.

5. Nexus Red Light Crossing Trials

DO began discussions on the Nexus Red Light Crossing trial, voicing strong concerns about the proposed enforcement camera at Callerton Crossing. Works had begun without any approval from Newcastle City Council, Northumbria Police or NSRI. The scheme has temporarily been halted.

RK has presented a report based on a business case put forward by Nexus. The Rail Inspectorate requires some action to be taken by Nexus to address the issue of level crossings by 2010. Newcastle City Council has vetoed speed humps and barriers are costly at £800,000 per scheme and would cause an extra 40 sec of extra delay on road space per train.

There was concern expressed about the evidence provided of collisions at level crossings. It is estimated that 5000 motorists jump the red light at Callerton every year. However, in the last ten years there has not been a single injury collision at Callerton. DO and NF (NP) expressed concern about setting a precedent of putting enforcement cameras at the level crossing that did not meet current partnership collision criteria.

RK expressed concern over technology of the cameras, but that would be monitored as part of the trial. RK also stressed that this was a trial and some criteria should be set for success that may not relate to casualty reduction but based on reducing incidents of red-light jumping at level crossings. This is a trial and the two options. One is to support the scheme and evaluate and then decide whether or not it is a success to see if enforcement should continue or be rolled out. The other option is not to support, but NEXUS could continue but there would be no legal consequences, but a letter warning the offending motorist. RK said this would send mixed signals to motorists about what is an enforceable camera. NF (NP) said a trial must include enforcement if it is to be effective.

DO highlighted that not sufficient to avoid allowing Nexus to carry on without support based on the negative image that might result from another use of camera enforcement. JF highlighted that negative image was not an issue,

but there must be a real expectation of enforcement for a sufficient alteration of driver behaviour and to increase compliance with all traffic laws.

NF (NP) and DO said criteria should be set prior but it was an issue not basing this on collisions. RK put it out the group of what would constitute a successful trial based on incidents of red-lights. RK put the support of the trial out to a vote and the majority voted to support the trail and then evaluate after 6 months. DO voted against supporting the scheme based on the concerns raised.

6. Digitisation

In 5 years time Serco, the sole provider of Gatso equipment, will no longer support the use of wet film cameras. However, Robot said this could extend up to 10 years. RK pointed out that this claim might be to delay the procurement in order that their product may be through type approval. Regardless the partnership would be required to replace existing wet-film Gatso fixed cameras with a new digital alternative.

RK produced a report that laid out several options. The first is to replace all fixed Gatso cameras, which would be a significant capital outlay, which was dismissed as a recommendation as it would be too costly. The second is to replace those, which currently meet partnership casualty reduction criteria for installation and the remaining historic cameras would continue to be operated by wet-film cameras until no longer supported. The final option is to wait two years until a new SLA is in place and there may be several more digital options available on the market.

RK recommended the second option, being to replace those that meet partnership casualty reduction criteria as he had identified the £260k for digitisation, which would mean no additional expenditure for the partners. If the partners were to wait, there may not be the funding streams to digitise in two years time. 17 fixed Gatso cameras had been identified as meeting the partnership criteria. However, RK highlighted the main concern being additional roadside furniture to house the flash, but this would also house the transmitter, which is required to be housed externally on all devices according to Home Office type approval.

AB asked what the funding would cover and RK highlighted the identified cameras listed in the report circulated to the WG members. RK asked for a vote from funding partners. DO and AB voted to take no action and PF voted for digitising the listed cameras. It was decided that all funding partners have a say and RK would contact the remaining three to get their view before submitting recommendation to the Steering Group.

Action: RK

7. NDORS/Speed Awareness

NF (NP) has sent recommendations about the administration cost for the police, which is £15 per ticket under the new ACPO model. £15 for every offence would come back to the originating police force. NF (NP) could not give the recommendations to group until the chief officers had a chance to discuss them, however inline with ACPO, they would be put into road safety measures.

AB raised serious concerns about funding for the police, which has become more of an issue as a result of the procurement of NDORS scheme, which Northumberland had put in a tender. AB felt that the police should put the £15 back into the partnership. If this was not the case Northumberland may have to reduce it's contribution to the partnership on a pro rata basis.

RK said the police need to be careful about the timing of any potential change in the thresholds in conjunction with the new NDORS scheme beginning.

The group queried again what the recommendations were and what was meant by road safety as the police could consider roads policing a road safety measure, but using the money could be construed as double funding. NF (NP) again said he could not discuss the options but all related to road safety. DO again wanted a clear idea of what road safety measures meant. DO said be supported the money being given to the partnership. PF agreed that the money should be given to NSRI.

It was noted that the cost to the partnership to process each ticket exceeds £15 and there was broad consensus that the partnership should reduce it's contribution to Northumbria Police's revenue costs by £15 for each diverted offender to Speed Awareness if the police were to retain the £15 funding. The total reduction would be approximately £400k based on current projections.

The group wanted road safety measures to be clearly defined by the police.

Action: NF (NP)

8. Finance

RK gave the final position for 2007/08 as a £160k underspend and there were several ways to allocate money this issue will be addressed by the Steering Group.

RA asked if this was part of the surplus and RK highlighted that this was over and above the agreed surplus.

RK gave a breakdown of the current projections for this financial year, which has the partnership running under projections but were online to meet fiscal targets.

KW said that only Northumberland, Sunderland, HMCS and Northumbria Police have returned claims on time.

RK outlined the provisional expenditure estimates for next year, which includes funding for police without projected cost savings for civilianisation. Potential additional surplus of £38k running below SLA levels are projected for next fiscal year.

KW reminded all partners that second quarter claims need to be back by 17 October 2008.

Action: All spending partners

9. Communications

JF presented summary review of working practices for communications. While expenditure had not decreased value for money has increased due to smarter working practices, better negotiating with contractors and better use of marketing mediums. Traditional methods would be used in conjunction with new media to provide a comprehensive message.

Activities are going to plan and a schedule of events was produced to the group. The poor weather over summer has affected turnout at some of the events, but on the whole they were going successful.

The new concept Krash TV was up and running and JF was trying to ensure it was distributed through LAs in addition to a strong push to the public via new media means and social networking sites. Krash Magazine would also be launched and each partner would be provided with a stock of the magazine to distribute.

A motorcycle forum was held in conjunction with Northumbria Police to address the issue of motorcycle fatalities. Following from research conducted with would distribute to the group, a new approach to engaging with motorcyclists was discussed. The forum is a broad partnership approach and included RSOs, university researchers, motorcycle dealers, advanced rider and training groups, the fire services, police and other motorcycle enthusiasts and stakeholders. The forum was a springboard for engaging motorcyclists allowing them to take ownership of a regional biking website and training initiatives. The partnership would continue to support the police's Cornering Clinics and would work with all partners to focus on improving motorcycle skills.

RA asked that a case study be produced to highlight the positive partnership working. He also stated that JF produced a report for the LTP and the communications proposal and current activity had been well received by the Tyne and Wear LTP.

JF would also be working with partners on examining the issue of elderly drivers. DB had been looking into the extent of the problem and would produce some analysis shortly.

JF also announced that the events management and road shows were in the tender process. This was to ensure best value for money and that a new framework was to be put into place there is more synergy between all campaign elements.

There is also a focus on pedestrians in Tyne and Wear, particularly in Newcastle dealing with pedestrians on a night out between 9pm and 3am and in Sunderland, where there is a general pedestrian issue. PF asked what examination about pedestrians in North Tyneside with reference to Tynemouth and Whitley Bay where there are many drinking on nights out. DB would look at the data for North Tyneside.

It was asked of the group if there are any suggestions about the message to be targeted pedestrians. JF said they had identified communications methods but that there was a deficiency in a message targeting pedestrians as it is a wide audience. There is very little research into what messages are effective. The group said they would consider messages

BM asked about targeting the universities in Newcastle. JF said that was the intention but the cost for attending the fresher's events was extremely high and prohibitive, but they were working on negotiating. There will be an event on Northumberland Street at some point.

Action: JF & DB

10. Any other business

PF said they had partnership VAS signs in the storage and they need to be moved soon. RK said he would contact PF to discuss removal and storage.

Action: RK

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday 6 November at 9:30am** in Development and Enterprise meeting room SE21 at Gateshead Civic Centre.