

Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative

Minutes of Working Group Meeting

22 May 2008

Gateshead Civic Centre Development & Enterprise

Present:

Ray King	Project Manager (Chair)
Jeremy Forsberg	Communications Manager
Danny Barker	Data Support Officer
Neil Thorpe	Newcastle University
Kelly Wilson	Gateshead Council (Finance)
Peter Morris	Highways Agency
Paul Fleming	North Tyneside Council
Alan Bawn	Northumberland County Council
Kevin Wellden	Northumbria Police
John Bourn	LTP Core Team
Geoff Fisher	Sunderland City Council

Apologies:

Neil Frier	Gateshead Council
Denise Newman	HMCS
Allan Calvert	Sunderland City Council
Rohail Ahmed	LTP Core Team
Derek Ord	Newcastle City Council
Sia Mahmoodshahi	South Tyneside Council

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

3. Matters arising

Road Safety Support:

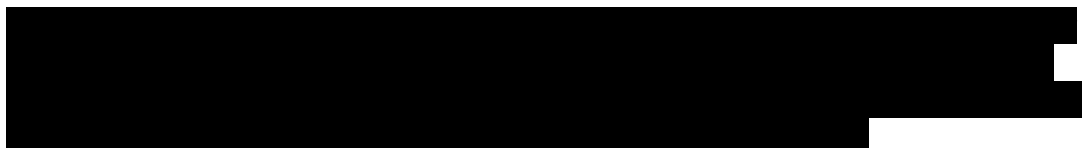
The general consensus between partnerships nationally is that joining RSS is a worth while and value for money decision with only two partnerships nationally taking the decision not to join.

Contact with the Crown Prosecution Service has been made and they are still working out how many vehicle offences are normally dismissed before a court hearing is heard.

Northumbria Police have agreed to contribute £12K to the cost of joining RSS providing the local authorities are will to contribute the remaining amount (£11,500).

In light of the recent findings the group agreed that RK can make the recommendation to the Steering Group that the partnership should join the RSS scheme, this will be done by email so membership can be completed before the Steering Group meeting in September.

Public Concern Site Certificates:



Action: All LA's

Site Re-prioritisation:

The re-grading off core mobile camera sites has now been completed and the new grades have been implemented. The new grading system is far more dynamic and should allow a quick response to any changes in traffic behaviour at camera sites, rather than waiting for an annual review.

4. Project issues & progress

The selection process for new core camera sites is still ongoing. DB has received replies from all except Newcastle. Once all local authorities have submitted site lists then speed surveys at these sites will be commissioned and the results analysed.

In 07/08 the average fixed enforcement days per month was 427 and the average mobile enforcement hours per month was 313. The fixed days were significantly higher than the levels stated in the SLA, however, due to court abstractions and staff change-over the mobile hours was slightly down on agreed levels.

5. Finance

KW informed the group that the 07/08 accounts were under spent by a total of £167K. The Steering Group will make a decision in September regarding the disposal of this money; likely options are that it will: be rolled forward to the following year; kept in a pot to cover the expense of switching to digital cameras; or returned to the funding partners.

The revenue funding for the 08/09 budget will be paid via the Area Based Grant system on a monthly basis and the capital will be paid in full by the DfT in May. Therefore Northumberland County Council will be invoiced in June and October for their contribution and the surplus for North and South Tyneside being paid in June.

North and South Tyneside are to confirm to KW the bank details she holds are correct for this payment.

KW noted that Quarter 1 claims must be submitted by 22 July at the latest.

The Tyne & Wear LTP have given JF an additional £144K to fund extra communications activity in the Tyne & Wear area, particularly in Newcastle and Sunderland. The breakdown of the extra funding is as follows:

Gateshead £10,000
Newcastle £54,405
North Tyneside £10,000
South Tyneside £10,000
Sunderland £59,515

PM asked how the police I.T system 'Pentip' was now being funded. RK informed all that £250K had been set aside for this from the 08/09 accounts to cover 50% of the likely cost of installing 'Pentip'.

6. Route signage/enforcement

A paper was distributed to the group prior to the meeting regarding route signing carried out by Thames Valley partnership. The results from the paper were very positive. However, in the Northumbria region the HA have announced that they are set to remove similar signs from the A1 as they are deemed to be a distraction to drivers. It was therefore decided that the partnership would not undertake route signage, as this would send a mixed message to the motoring public with no firm proof that any long term benefits can be achieved.

The group then discussed the possibilities of route enforcement. The current criteria states that to enforce a route that there must be three camera sites within a 20km stretch of road. RK suggested that a trial of route enforcement be carried out on the A696 in Northumberland, a road which was recently reported by the press to be one of the top ten most challenging roads in England. Currently 6 camera sites operate on the road and the road can be separated into two 20km routes both with 3 camera sites each. To have the maximum impact on driver behaviour and route enforcement would be heavily published. The group agreed that further analysis of the collisions on this route was required to ascertain the extent of the problem. Also RK agreed to drive the route with a member of Northumbria Police to carry out further assessment.

Action: DB & RK

7. VAS project

The partnership has run several VAS schemes in the past 4 years, using both fixed and variable position signs. All partnership studies have shown that VAS have a limited effect over time. The current rotational scheme allows signs to be moved around the region for 6 week periods. Local authorities can join the rotational scheme if they pay for the sign.

It was agreed that the current policy on VAS would be maintained with no new capital programmes being undertaken by the partnership.

8. Replacement of wet film cameras

In 5 years time Serco, the sole provider of Gatso equipment, will no longer support the use of wet film cameras. Therefore the partnership would be required to replace existing fixed cameras with a new digital alternative. The cost of replacing a Gatso wet film with a Gatso digital is around £37K per housing. With such large costs associated with any change over to digital, site by site analysis will be needed to determine if and why a housing should be replaced with the digital alternative. It was noted that several of the older cameras were put in for political reasons or put on roads, which have since been bypassed.

The group were happy with the current decommissioning policy and agreed that RK should draft a criterion for decision-making purposes for digital replacements. RK would like to go to tender for new digital equipment in January 2009.

9. Communications

JF stated that all communications activity was running to plan and would send a calendar of events to all partners for the upcoming campaigns and summer road shows.

Action: JF

10. Any other business

KW(NP) discussed a police campaign running in June to tackle drink driving in the region. A similar campaign was run over the Christmas period and statistics showed that in the Northumbria area positive tests were higher than the national trend.

GF requested an update on a recent court case relating to a speeding offence detected in Sunderland where the accused had various issues with the signage at the site. RK responded.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 09 July 2008 at 9:30am** at Gateshead Civic Centre.