

# Motorists Forum

## Minutes of meeting of 22 January 2014

### Attendees:

Edmund King (Chair)	AA
Gerry Keaney	BVRLA
Joe Greenwell	RAC Foundation
Stephen Joseph	Campaign for Better Transport
Theo de Pencier	FTA
David Bizley	RAC Motoring
Christopher Macgowan	University of Birmingham
James Dalton	ABI
Alastair Peoples	DVSA
<b>DfT</b>	
John Parkinson	Director, Motoring, Freight and London
Jon Griffiths	Strategic Roads Sponsorship
Paul O'Sullivan	Road Strategy and Charging
Jessica Matthew	Road User Licencing, Insurance and Safety
Dawn Lauder	Campaigns and Publishing
Fran Davies	Strategic Communcations
Miriam Lea	DfT, Forum Secretariat

### Apologies

Mike Hawes	SMMT
David Davies	FACTS
Garrett Emmerson	TfL
Dave Jones	ACPO
Graham Dalton	HA

### Item 1 – Welcome, introduction and minutes

Edmund King started the meeting by introducing Gerry Keaney from BVRLA and gave apologies for SMMT, FACTS, TfL, ACPO and HA.

The Minute of the last meeting was discussed with the action for a substantial item on new car technologies/meeting the digital challenge being carried over to a subsequent meeting, ditto a session on parking with the Roads Minister (**Action: Secretariat**). The Minute of the last meeting was agreed.

Members discussed interest in and media coverage of the opening of a new pub on a service area in a service area on the M40 and raised questions about DfT's policy on providing signs for motorway/roadside pubs, as well as requesting further information on licencing laws on and around historic and newer motorway service areas. Jon Griffiths agreed to provide briefing on the latter (**Action: Jon Griffiths**).

James Dalton of the ABI was welcomed to the Forum.

### Item 2 – Oral updates

John Parkinson ran through the motoring related aspects of the Autumn Statement/National Infrastructure Plan from December, notably announcements on the A50, the A14, public sector fleets and ultra-low emission vehicles, and autonomous vehicles. The move to paying VED by direct debit and getting rid of tax discs was also noted. Members expressed an interest in the studies taking place around autonomous vehicles and the research and trials taking place across Government and agreed an update in the context of new car technologies would be welcome. It was noted that it would be helpful to cover off the technological and economic opportunities new technologies were opening up, alongside some of the regulatory, road safety and insurance challenges (**Action: Secretariat**).

December's Parking Consultation was also mentioned, and members reminded of the closing date of 14<sup>th</sup> February for views. John emphasised that DfT was particularly interested in evidence, as well as the views of those affected by parking policies including businesses and pedestrians as well as motorists.

The launch in December of the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS) was also mentioned, and again members were reminded of the closing date for submissions (26<sup>th</sup> February). It was noted that the NNNPS would be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. There was some discussion from members about whether the policy on demand management as set out in the NNNPS and associated documents represented a change in Departmental position. Paul O'Sullivan outlined that it continued to be the position that a system of national road pricing was not being advocated. There remained interest in looking at tolls to help fund substantial enhancements and new capacity, not to manage demand.

### **Item 3 – Young Drivers**

Jessica Matthew led an update on the status of work looking at improving the safety of young drivers. Current work was focussed at looking at evidence on risk assessment and attitudes towards risk. Work was also taking place on the effectiveness of police courses and impact on behaviour change, although it was noted that there were no plans to introduce blanket speed awareness courses for younger drivers. There was still strong interest in telematics and members were updated on an event the following week that would look at what technologies were being used, an exploration as to why they are not being used universally by industry, and would include discussion on whether there should be a 'big' telematics product.

Alastair Peoples gave a run through what was being looked at within DVSA and his view that using the experience of raising standards within professional driving industries could provide safety benefits. Discussion focussed mainly on the current test and whether there was potential to build an appetite for more and better training, and what incentives could be in place to encourage ongoing improvement in driving skills. It was noted that in many other walks of life a marginal pass was not seen as a cause for celebration, and that there was perhaps scope to look at the ability to be rated A\*. Alastair raised the question about whether the current test was focusing too heavily on technical aspects as well as how consumers could be better informed about the quality of their approved driving instructor.

Members shared their views on the current status of the green paper and offered views on where they thought proposals on graduated licencing should sit within proposals. It was noted by DfT that the impact on restrictions on driving and employment opportunities for the young needed to be more thoroughly explored and welcomed work being undertaken by the RAC Foundation. Similarly, ways of bringing those most affected by proposals into the process and more actively seeking views from young drivers, prospective drivers and parents would need to happen before proposals could be fully formed. Members were asked whether they could offer

support in both areas. It was noted that work looking at the test by DVSA would take place at the same time as ongoing work on young drivers by DfT.

It was also noted that evidence on driving ability and risk was necessary when looking at reducing premium, and sufficient data was needed. ABI restated their strong support for measures on graduated licencing and highlighted that telematics would not be enough to reduce premiums for younger drivers.

The Chair suggested that young drivers become a standing agenda item (**Action: Secretariat/Jessica Matthew**).

#### **Item 4 – Action for Roads/Roads Reform Update**

Paul O' Sullivan started by setting out the programme of work that was anticipated for the following year, and the points at which the Department would like views from the organisations present on policy development.

He noted that the consultation on Transforming the Highways Agency had closed and responses were being considered. There was broad based support for proposals from the organisations that had responded, but a variety of views expressed on the role and functions of the watchdog and efficiency monitor. It was envisaged that a response to consultation would be published in around a month, and expect legislation to be introduced later in the year. The intention to produce a Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) by the end of the year was shared with members, and plans to engage on a draft strategy in the middle point of the year. The National Networks National Policy Statement should be designated by the end of the calendar years. Members asked for clarification on the Route Based Strategy process and timetable, and how that affected the RIS. It was noted that there was an opportunity for refinement of elements of the RIS following publication of the Route Based Strategies.

Jon Griffiths gave an update on the recent consultation on variable speed limits on a short section of the M1, near Sheffield. It was reiterated that the proposal was to introduce a 60mph speed limit for the first few years of the scheme for a relatively short stretch of road - around 30 miles - until improvements to the fleet of vehicles allowed air quality improvements to be made. The road itself would feel very similar to other areas of the network with variable speed limits. Overall, the scheme on the M1 would increase capacity by a third and reduce congestion.

It was noted that the Department was looking more widely at a range of mitigations in areas of concern in terms of air quality and that variable speeds was just one of the options being examined. DfT was also looking at a possible trail of barriers, and in looking at what could be done more holistically with neighbouring local authorities to improve air quality – possibly around fleet mix. An announcement on a variable speed limit for the M3 was expected in a number of weeks, although on a smaller scale than that proposed for the M1. It was noted that the Government position was very much rolling out smart motorways and improved infrastructure whilst meeting environmental commitments.

Stephen Joseph offered members a more detailed briefing on the science and health impacts of pollutants. Members welcomed this and noted that there was uncertainty in some sectors about whether carbon/particulates and petrol/diesel were the main problems. **Action: Secretariat/Stephen Joseph**. Members also discussed the air quality and carbon impacts of traffic flows and stop/start traffic.

#### **Item 5 – DVSA: VOSA and DSA Merger**

Alastair Peoples provided a handout setting out the background to the merger of the two organisations and the Motoring Services Strategy. Areas of cost savings were identified, and it was noted that many of the learnings and benefits from the programme of accredited test centres could be used more widely. Current work for the new organisation focussed on an operational strategy for the new organisation and the recruitment of a permanent board.

## **Item 6 – Road Safety**

Jessica Matthew provided updates on the following areas:

**Careless driving penalty** – . The Department was not currently aware of any concerns about the new law. It was noted that it was too early to assess the impact of the change as data on the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued by police had yet to reach the Home Office. Once sufficient evidence was available an assessment could be made of effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence suggested that new Fixed Penalty Notices were being issued.

**20mph zones** – aware of increasing rollout by local authorities. Data was not collected on each area and members identified a gap in evidence about the impact and effectiveness of the new zones. It was noted that many zones had broad public support. There was also the need to look at the impact of 20mph on walking and cycling, and that some zones were not being set up simply to reduce casualties, but to promote more active travel and that needed to be part of any evaluation. It was noted that UCL/LSTM were already looking at this.

**Drink Drive** – the Deregulation Bill which was expected to be introduced in Parliament shortly would remove the statutory option whereby a driver recording a positive breathalyser test could play for time by insisting on a second sample. Breathalysers were now so accurate that there was no case for maintaining this option. Mobile evidential breath test kits were expected next year. The lower drink drive limit was anticipated to be brought in this year in Scotland. There was some discussion of the implications of having a UK wide licence with different conditions.

**Drug Drive** – Members were updated on plans to introduce a new drug drive law and the supportive testing equipment that would be introduced by police forces. It was noted that a new campaign would accompany new laws, aimed at recreational drug users, and that a communications plan would be put in place to improve the information given to those on prescribed medicines so that they were fully aware of the impact of medication on driving ability. It was noted that there was no intention to specifically target those taking prescription drugs.

Dawn Lauder from the **THINK! campaign** team gave members a run through of the THINK! strategy for 2014-2015. She noted that a thorough review of activity had taken place over the last eight months taking into account evaluation of past campaigns, changes in casualty data and trends in how the communications landscape has changed. There had been wide engagement with other bodies with an interest in road safety. The upshot of the review led to two important questions for THINK! on how it talks to audiences, it's tone and principles and what THINK! talks about. Three strategic priorities emerged – a campaign to support new drug driving legislation; a campaign to ultimately improve safety at junctions, particularly for cyclists and motorcyclists and a campaign on improving driving behaviours on rural roads, notably to prevent accidents at bends where speed is likely to have been a factor. These priorities are in line with recent casualty data and are being explored and/or developed further. Work would also be carried out via PR, partnerships and digital activity on child road safety, drink drive and cycling and motorcycles.

## **Item 8 – AOB**

Members were asked to submit expressions of interest in succeeding Edmund King as Chair of the Forum now that his term is due to come to an end. Members agreed that it was not necessary to have a Vice-Chair. The Forum thanked Edmund for his excellent chairmanship over the past year.

DVSA made an offer to members for a more detailed update of their work.

**22 January 2014.**