

Motorists Forum

Minutes of meeting of 07 May 2014

Attendees:

Mike Hawes (Chair)	SMMT
Gerry Keaney	BVRLA
Stephen Glaister (for Joe Greenwell)	RAC Foundation
Stephen Joseph	Campaign for Better Transport
Theo de Pencier	FTA
Edmund King	AA
David Bizley	RAC Motoring
Dave Jones	ACPO
Ginny Clarke (for Graham Dalton)	HA
DfT	
John Parkinson	Director, Motoring, Freight and London
Stephen Fidler (item 2)	Local Transport Funding, Growth and Delivery
John Dowie	Director, Strategic Roads
Jon Griffiths	Strategic Roads Sponsorship
Elliot Shaw (items 4 and 5)	Strategic Roads Investment
Cathy Miller	Strategic Roads Investment
Paul O'Sullivan	Road Strategy and Charging
Jessica Matthew	Road User Licencing, Insurance and Safety
Dawn Lauder (item 6)	Campaigns and Publishing
Lydia Fitzpatrick	Strategic Communications
Miriam Lea	DfT, Forum Secretariat

Apologies

Christopher Macgowan	
James Dalton	ABI
David Davies	FACTS
Garrett Emmerson	TfL
Alastair Peoples	DVSA
Graham Dalton	HA

Actions

- A slot to be found at a future meeting for a session on the latest scientific research on public health impacts of air quality was carried over - **Action: Secretariat**
- The RAC Foundation asked for a discussion document that set out the efforts being made to tackle potholes in one place to be circulated to members - **Action: Stephen Fidler**
- Ginny Clarke to re-look at communications around new Dartford Tunnel payment being single not multi use and ensure that this is clear (Ginny Clarke)
- RAC Foundation requested a Q&A to help provide information more widely on the changes at Dartford. The FTA asked for detail on what would be helpful

in terms of informing users of the tunnel in advance of the changes - **Action: Jon Griffiths**

- Paul O'Sullivan updated members on the work being done to update traffic forecasting at DfT and agreed to present the current status of work at the next meeting - **Action: Paul O'Sullivan/TASM/Secretariat**
- **John Dowie** to set out a proposal for more structured discussion as the Roads Investment Strategy is being developed
- CBT highlighted the opportunities being offered by new technologies to interact with road users, and offered to set up a briefing session for officials developing the RIS - **Action Stephen Joseph/John Dowie**
- Members asked for further detail of the newTHINK! rural roads campaign and for detail of the activity that would accompany a change in the drug drive law (**Action: Dawn Lauder/Secretariat**).

Item 1 – Welcome, introduction and minutes

Mike Hawes welcomed members to the meeting, notably Stephen Glaister and Ginny Clarke who were standing in for members from the RAC Foundation and HA respectively.

The Minute of the last meeting was discussed and actions updated. The action of finding a slot at a future meeting for a session on the latest scientific research on public health impacts of air quality was carried over (**Action: Secretariat**).

It was noted that the Roads Minister had accepted an invitation to the next meeting on 03 September, and members were asked for views on the topics that could be discussed. The Minute of the last meeting was agreed. John Miles has provisionally agreed to update members on intelligent mobility, and Ian Yarnold from DfT would follow this up with a short presentation on the work DfT was supporting in this area.

Item 2 – Oral updates

Stephen Fidler (DfT) ran through the various '**pothole**' announcements made since March, notably £380m in March, inclusive of £100m for tackling problems caused by severe weather and problems in specific areas and a £200m pothole fund announced in the Budget. Of the £200m, £168m is available to Local Authorities in England. A competitive process was in place for the pothole funding allocation, with bids assessed around efficiency, asset management and scale of need. DfT was looking to local authorities to adhere to a 'pothole pledge' to reduce the number of potholes on local roads. Consideration was given to bids that supported getting maintenance 'right first time' rather than patching and mending. It was estimated that around 3m potholes will be filled from the fund.

The FTA raised the issue of how best practice was being promoted across local authorities, to which it was noted that there were examples of the best performing local authorities that were being shared, but that a consultation was planned on ways to incentivise best practice in asset management.

RAC Motoring enquired about the figures from the Asphalt Alliance around the estimated cost of repairing all potholes and DfT's view of that estimate, to which it was noted that there remained a mixed picture on data, differences in the way that the 'standard' was being reported and an overall lack of reliable long term comparators. The RAC Foundation asked for a discussion document that set out the efforts being made to tackle potholes in one place to be circulated to members (**Action: Stephen Fidler**).

Stephen Fidler also presented members with an update on the **Local Growth Fund**, background, context and overall aims. He noted that around £1.1bn of the DfT's capital spend was being allocated to the fund initially, with £1bn a year for the rest of the period.

Strategic Economic Plans were received by DfT in March, and it was anticipated that an announcement would be made by summer recess on a potential pipeline of funding of new projects for local authorities. It was noted that bids included requests for skills, housing and other areas that would drive local growth – funding was not being ring-fenced for transport but through the fund significant amounts were being made available for transport priorities across the country.

Challenges remained in assessing bids around ensuring deliverability and ensuring environmental impacts were properly considered.

Members discussed action being taken to address risks and it was reiterated that the process gave Government the opportunity to set expectations around deliverability and maximising resource. The extent of involvement from the business sector was discussed and members queried the extent to which allocated funding was oversubscribed. It was noted that demand did indeed exceed supply and that Ministers would consider carefully the wide range of proposals being put to them.

Jon Griffiths gave members an update on the changes being planned for **Dartford** in removing the current 'tollbooth' barriers to create a 'pre-pay' and 'post-pay' system as in London. Members were given an update on the works taking place to prepare the tunnels for the changes, and the need to raise awareness amongst users of the tunnel. An update on current publicity and marketing plans were given, which would brand the charge with a similar logo to the congestion charge identity being used in London. Members were asked for assistance in reaching occasional users of the tunnel to avoid people receiving penalty fines unwittingly. Concerns were raised about making clear to users that unlike London the charge would be for one use only, rather than unlimited use for a set period of time. **Action: Ginny Clarke to re-look at communications being developed to ensure that this is clear.** The RAC Foundation asked for a Q&A to help provide information more widely on the changes at Dartford and the FTA asked for detail on what would be helpful in terms of communications (**Action: Jon Griffiths**)

Paul O'Sullivan took the opportunity to update members about the introduction of the HGV Levy that came into operation on 01 April. He noted that early indications showed a high level of compliance.

John Parkinson gave brief updates on the latest changes being made to Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions and drew member's attention to the consultation launched in early May. He went on to highlight the merger of the Driving Standards Agency and Vehicle and Operator Services Agency into the Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency in April. The Chair asked for members' experiences of the new agency to date.

Item 3 – Lighting and Highways Agency Roads

Jon Griffiths set out the HA's current lighting strategy and context to the HA's overall objectives, in response to recent media articles highlighting safety concerns on strategic and local authority roads. Key points made by Jon and Ginny Clarke included the problems around misunderstanding the contribution of lighting to driving safety and the cause of accidents and the need for a long term data set to provide robust evidence around the role of street lighting.

The AA made the point that on local authority roads lighting remained an important concern for pedestrians, as well as drivers, and other road users, and asked about the policy around balancing the need for efficiency and need with ensuring adequate lighting was in place when no hard shoulders were in place, visibility was poor and in bad weather. The HA outlined that sites where lighting levels had been reduced were chosen specifically as a result of having the lowest recorded accident data and where, if schemes were introduced today, lighting would be unlikely to be put in place. The problems in setting out meaningful data that addressed causality and road type was discussed. It was noted by members that some local authorities were responsive to the views of residents and had in some instances restored lighting.

Item 4 – Roads Reform Update

Paul O'Sullivan ran through last week's 'Transforming the HA' consultation decisions announcement, notably plans to set up a Strategic Road Network Monitor at the ORR and a Road User Focus at Passenger Focus, to provide greater oversight of the new body. Work was ongoing in terms of detailing the role of the monitor. The decision confirmed the introduction of a Roads Investment Strategy later in the year and governance arrangements. It was envisaged that primary legislation would support a licence and framework agreement for the new company.

It was noted that the Transport Select Committee had published its report into Strategic Roads, as well as the National Networks National Policy Statement and some discussion held around the points that had been raised. DfT officials were asked to respond to a number of points in the reports and highlighted that a formal response to the Committee would be made in the coming weeks. The TSC's acceptance of the need for investment in the strategic road network and the benefits of funding certainty was welcome. In terms of next steps, plans for legislation would need to be set out as part of the Queen's Speech in June.

Paul O'Sullivan updated members on the work being done to update traffic forecasting at DfT and agreed to present the current status of work at the next meeting (**Action: Paul O'Sullivan/TASM/Secretariat**).

It was agreed to capture updates on the Feasibility Studies and the Route Strategies as part of Item 5, on the Roads Investment Strategy.

Item 5 – Roads Investment Strategy (RIS).

Cathy Miller and Elliot Shaw presented members with emerging thinking on the Roads Investment Strategy, and the opportunity it gave to set out a longer term plan to improve the network. Members were given an indication of the areas being considered as part of the vision for the Strategic Road Network and options being looked at to measure the new organisation and its performance and asked for their expertise in helping to capture an overall vision for strategic roads that would resonate with those who relied upon them, as well as input into the development of the metrics being used to deliver improvements over time, and the pros and cons of various approaches. The importance of setting metrics that held the new company to account was stressed, and discussion was held on the complexities of establishing a reliable metric for measures that mattered to road users – such as safety – that were not wholly within the gift of the new company.

CBT highlighted the opportunities being offered by new technologies to interact with road users, and offered to set up a briefing session for officials developing the RIS (**Action Stephen Joseph/John Dowie**).

It was also noted that funding decisions about the schemes being taken forward after 2015 had been set out in previous fiscal statements. As work on other areas is developed it was the DfT's intention to set out a 'process document' to better inform interested parties about the development of the RIS and the areas that would be set out in more detail later in the year for comment and input. **An action was taken by John Dowie to set out a proposal for more structured discussion as the RIS is being developed for members.**

An update was given (carried over from item 4) on the publication of the next phase of the six Feasibility Studies and the 18 Route Strategies. Officials explained their relationship to the Roads Investment Strategy for this and future iterations of the RIS.

Item 6 – Road Safety

Jessica Matthew gave an update to members on the main developments since the last meeting, notably the commissioning of research on the impact of telematics and improving road safety and focus groups to explore directly with young drivers and their parents what road safety meant to them, to provide insight into the measures that mattered most. At DVSA, it was noted that the driving test was being reviewed which would impact on the way that people would be learning to drive and that work was at an early stage.

The development of new drug drive legislation was discussed, and noted that there were decisions to be made on when the new laws would come into effect, to ensure that they could be enforced effectively and best opportunity was being made of the opportunity to communicate information about the new laws/safer driving. It was noted that changes to Drink Drive laws, notably the Statutory Option, was on track.

Members were alerted to The Cross Border Enforcement Directive Judgement, from yesterday and the work that had started in examining the implications for the UK.

Dawn Lauder from the DfT THINK! campaign gave members a status update of planned campaign activity, notably the development of a 'rural roads' campaign, for which the creative was currently being tested for a planned July/August launch. (This is aimed at tackling 40% of casualties as a result of accidents on bends). The marketing team is also working on motorcycling activity to run over the summer – a re-run of radio advertising, plus digital and paid partnership. Plans for a drip feed of drink drive campaign activity throughout the year were on track, with activity planned around the World Cup and around Christmas. Plans were also being developed for activity to highlight the 50th anniversary of the first anti drink drive advertisement.

Members asked for further detail of the rural roads campaign and for detail of the activity that would accompany a change in the drug drive law (**Action: Dawn Lauder/Secretariat**).

Item 7 – AOB

Dates of the next meetings were confirmed.

Miriam Lea
07 May 2014.