

Meeting: 20 April 2017: NZ Transport Agency National Office, Room 4.07

Meeting summary

- SIG-LVR has been given task to identify national impact of road dust and to develop guidelines to mitigate this cost.
- Minutes of 13 February were confirmed with slight amendments.
- NZTA draft Gravel Roads and Dust Action Plan was presented for feedback and discussed in detail.
- The draft terms of reference (version 3 dated 18.4.17) were adopted with minor amendments.
- The actions and timing of actions were reviewed and actions to be undertaken before the next meeting were agreed.
- The group will reconvene in the second half of June.

Actions

1. **G. Haldane** to circulate the individual work streams of the Action Plan and get feedback, and coordinate.
2. **G. Haldane** to investigate short-term improvements to the dust risk matrix in conjunction with Wairoa DC (J. Cox), Whangarei DC (J. Devine) and FNDC (J. Robson).
3. **J. Williams** to draft a communications plan for NZTA designed to go out to councils to explain how to include dust mitigation in LTP and how to make applications for mitigation funding.
4. W. Newman to set up meeting date and venue for second half of June.

1. ATTENDING AND APOLOGIES

Present:

Jamie Cox	Wairoa DC	Convener
Cr Ann Court	Far North DC	
Jacqui Robson	Far North DC	
Garry McGraw	Kaipara DC	
Bernard Petersen	Kaipara DC	
Rui Leitao	Whanganui DC	
Steve Murrin	Marlborough Roads	
Murray Gimblett	NZTA P&I	
Glen Mackie	NZFOA	
Grant Rutledge	NZFOA - Nelson Forests	
Greg Haldane	NZTA	
Chris Gasson	NZTA - Auckland (by phone)	
Rob Hannaby	NZTA - Auckland (by phone)	
Jeannette Williams	NZTA - Hamilton (by phone)	
Louise Wickham	Health (Emission Impossible)	
Travis Ancelet	Environment	
Fiona Knight	Cresmere Consulting	Secretary

Apologies:

Tom Simonson
Wayne Newman
Karen Parcell

Local Government NZ
RCAF R&G Steering Group
Bay of Plenty RC

2. SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The meeting noted the tasks given to the Special Interest Group on Low Volume Roads to identify the social, economic, health and safety impacts of dust from unsealed roads and to develop national guidelines on best practice for practitioners to plan investment to mitigate the costs of dust from such roads.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING ON 13 FEBRUARY 2017

The meeting confirmed the minutes of 13 February 2017, but agreed that the actions should be amended as follows:

- “Conceptual steps for a policy update” to “An action plan for a policy update”
- “Conceptual engagement plan for NZTA to work with local councils” to “Communications plan for NZTA to work with local councils”
- “Product development to support a national policy statement” to “Identify required elements and work to support a national policy statement”

4. GRAVEL ROADS AND DUST ACTION PLAN – NZTA PRESENTATION

Greg Haldane presented the draft action plan, explaining that it is still at the consultation and feedback stage. It seeks to define the issue and the desired outcome.

It acknowledges the health, environmental and economic impacts, as well as the loss of amenity effects and annoyance, and recognises that the intensity of the problem is increasing in line with the intensity of primary industry activities. The current issues are seen to be:

- a limited strategic approach
- local RCAs struggling to find funding
- local political issues
- gaps in knowledge and tools (although an extensive list of work has been done in this area since 2014)

Desired outcomes are:

- reduce the adverse effects
- achieve compliance with NES Air Quality and the RMA
- implement effective and efficient mitigation

This reflects the Strategic Directives for NZTA in both its Strategy to keep people safe, which is seen to include both public health and the environment, and the GPS 2018 Land Transport.

The action plan proposes several parallel work streams:

- Investment and research
 - Gap analysis
 - Investment logic mapping exercise to define the extent of the problem

- Estimate the human cost nationally
- Strategic business case
 - Health risk
 - Legal compliance
 - Economic efficiency and effectiveness
- Investment guidance
 - Economic Evaluation Manual – simplified method
 - Dust risk matrix
- Resources
 - Economic assessment tool
 - Mitigation toolbox
 - Risk screening tools
 - GIS mapping
 - Communications and on-line tool kits

Discussion

The Action Plan could be seen as a plan to develop a plan. It appears not to reflect the sense of urgency and frustration being felt in rural areas about this issue. There is an urgency to address the need to provide funding for this issue and to recognise that the scale of the problem means that it cannot be treated within existing maintenance budgets and allocations.

The remit to the LGNZ Conference did not envisage this issue being funded exclusively from the NLTP. Other parties have moral and financial responsibilities. For example, FNDC breaches NES Air Quality daily, but Northland RC has not acted. This should not be seen simply as a Transport issue.

Also, mitigation should not be seen as the only response. The obligation to avoid needs to be considered in the planning context for approvals for changes to land use intensity, including new forestry planting. In forming a national growth strategy, MPI and Environment need to fully capture the costs as well as the benefits, and these include public health costs.

At local planning levels, no new dwelling should be permitted within 150m of an unsealed road. GIS mapping is probably unnecessary, as local councils are already fully aware of the 'hotspots' for road dust.

The current tools appear to have too high a threshold. Only one third of the worst road in FNDC met the matrix criteria, with a logging truck using it every 15 minutes. Only one application has been received by NZTA and it has been approved. A review of the criteria used for the dust risk matrix should be a priority.

Although NZTA considers the monitoring evidence done to date to be sufficient, for Health and Environment (and possibly MPI) additional monitoring evidence will be necessary.

5. REVIEW OF DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The meeting approved Version 3 dated 18.4.17. The owners of the task to determine research, if needed, to support a business case for research were amended to Louise Wickham, Greg Haldane, Murray Gimblett, Chris Gasson and Travis Ancelet.

6. REVIEW OF ACTIONS AND TIMINGS

The meeting identified a need for both short term and long term plans. In the short term there is a need to improve the access to funding for urgent mitigation. For the longer term there is a need to identify priorities. An immediate list would be:

- Bus stops, especially school bus stops
- Dwellings close to unsealed roads
- Unsealed roads with high AADT

Older communities and older housing stock near unsealed roads needs to have a higher priority than more modern construction, because these homes are less air-tight than later homes.

Concurrent with any response within NZTA, there needs to be continuing pressure for a wider Crown response to the issue than purely within the context of Transport.

NZTA (Greg) will work with Wairoa, Whangarei and FNDC on improving the dust risk matrix. NZTA (Jeannette) will look at an improved communications plan to lift applications and to encourage local RCAs to include dust mitigation in their LTP to begin to state the extent of the problem.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

There has been some misunderstanding in the sector toward the health impacts resulting from road dust. The meeting agreed to respond to correct his lack of current knowledge (where and when appropriate).

8. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The group will reconvene in the second half of June.

Meeting concluded at 5.00 pm.