

Minutes of meeting of the UK Roads Liaison Group held on 20 April 2018 at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

UKRLG members attending:

Graham Pendlebury,	Chairman, DfT
James Bailey	Staffordshire County Council, representing the UK Roads Board
Bill Barker	Representing SCOTS
Steve Berry	DfT
Nicola Debnam	Highways England
Hugh Gillies	Transport Scotland
Rob Gillespie	Hounslow Highways, representing TAG
John Irvine	Infrastructure Northern Ireland
Mark Kemp	Buckinghamshire County Council, representing the UK Network Management Board
Liz Kirkham	Gloucestershire County Council, representing the UK Bridges Board
Lindsay McGregor	Representing the UK Lighting Board
Garry Sterritt	TfL, Chair of the UK Asset Management Board
Mark Stevens	Suffolk County Council, representing ADEPT on behalf of Parvis Khansari
Darren Thomas	Pembrokeshire, representing CSS Wales
Justin Ward	CIHT (Secretariat)

In attendance

Kevin Golding-Williams	DfT (for whole meeting but focus on item 2)
Chris Spong	Hyperion (item 1 -2)
Dave Johnson	TfL, UK Lighting Board (for item 1-3)

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

Apologies from Parvis Khansari and Anthony Boucher

2. Footways & Cycleways Guidance

Graham Pendlebury introduced the item, noting that the Guidance has been approved by the FCMG and the UK Roads Board. Graham was asking that the Group endorse the Guidance, with until Friday 27th April for final review.

James Bailey said the work started in 2016 and aligns with the Code of Practice 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure'. Chris Spong then provided an overview of the research project. The first project was based on materials and updating existing guidance that was now fairly out-of-date. Second project was focused on risk and the maintenance of footways and cycleways – this included the Guidance document providing a practical approach and this has been supported by a spreadsheet tool for inspecting and maintaining footways, based on risk. The final element was based around the levels of service that cyclists would like to see and this was based on research in London.

Chris then noted that the document has been through a lot of consultation. Graham Pendlebury asked for views. John Irvine asked if the risks are weighted or are they all the same. Chris said that the footways tool construction type and the use and was based on

research – this looks at the relationship between defect type and risk. In the Guidance it assess reviewing historical defects.

John Irvine noted that rating claims would be higher than for defects – an aspect that came out workshop at the Urban Big Data Centre.

Chris noted that the evidence based approach was underpinning the Guidance and a compare wise approach to assess the weighting. But this is for authorities to determine, so based on evidence they have issues such as claims might be rated as higher risk.

Darren Thomas noted the Active Travel Act investment into cycle ways has resulted in a greater focus on maintenance, so therefore these documents will be helpful. Chris responded noted that a lot of focus is encouraging people to cycle and the provision of new infrastructure but that the maintenance of existing infrastructure has not been given sufficient focus.

Kevin said he found it a really useful document and also that it was good to see the links with the Welsh Active Travel Act. The issues of maintenance and providing advice. There was also reference that the DfT is about to update the Local Transport Note so these documents will be referenced in that.

Mark Kemp said that the document was really timely and that Members within his authority were focused on footway and cycleway condition. Graham provided a summary noting the positive commentary on the document and the Group agreed to warmly endorse this document.

Action: UKRLG endorsed the Guidance subject to a final review of one week for to review the document for any factual errors (deadline on 27 April 2018)

Graham asked about roll-out of the Guidance. Chris noted that there would be an article in Transportation Professional and a potential event with CIHT. James Baily noted that it would be useful to have reference of this included within the UKRLG Code.

3. Illuminated Traffic Signs TSRGD 2016

Lindsay McGregor provided a background to the Guidance document, saying that this was initiated a while ago and following the initial proposal a number of elements have changed. The current document has been recently reviewed by the Scottish Roads Research Board.

Dave Johnson noted that the final version was not quite ready, but provided a brief overview of the document. Dave said that there are very subtle changes in TSRGD 2016 but one significant change is that external illumination for signs can now be remote. This opens up the possibility of a risk-based approach for how you illuminate signs – either directly or through street lighting. Dave said that some authorities have started to do this, including Highways England. £100m is spent on the illumination of signs and Dave said that some of these probably do not require illumination. For renewal of signs with illumination can be a significant cost.

Dave also noted Northern Ireland and many European countries do not require direct illumination. Dave said that the UK Lighting Board was looking for endorsement of the Guidance by the UKRLG. Graham then asked for comments.

Steve Berry said that this has been a contentious issue for a number of years and currently the DfT are not in a position to endorse the document at this point. Steve added that he understood Transport Scotland still had some concerns.

Hugh Gillies joined the meeting now. Hugh said that Transport Scotland were not in a position to endorse the document at this point in this time.

Graham clarified that a huge amount of useful work has been undertaken and that the UKRLG was keen to provide Guidance for the sector. Graham said he was really keen to get the document out, and that differences in application by highway authorities was a risk due to inconsistencies currently.

John Irvine said as you move to de-illumination that the right specification for retro-reflective signs has to be very carefully considered and that Northern Ireland had consulted experts to assist with this. The focus on energy saving and traffic signs are about 10% of their asset and that de-illumination is important.

Mark Stevens said that his authority had started to look at de-illumination, but that they were also looking at potential de-cluttering and consideration of the Roads Signs Task Force recommendations were also being considered. Mark said is there a need to link to this document to the work by the UK Lighting Board. Mark said their authorities spend is about 20% of the energy budget for his authority. There was reference to the Times picking up a FOI on the Roads Signs Task Force.

Action: Dave Johnson to share the next iteration of the Illumination Traffic Signs TSRGD 2016 Guidance with UKRLG members

Graham proposed setting up a small Task & Finish Group to finalise the document, the UKRLG members agreed with this.

Action: Set-up Task and Finish Group comprising Transport Scotland, DfT and ADEPT to work with the UK Lighting Board to finalise the document

Action: Include on next UKRLG agenda item on the Illumination Traffic Signs TSRGD 2016 Guidance

4. Minutes of last meeting

Accuracy agreed of last minutes, apart from Steve Davy not Steve Daily (action amend minutes). Justin Ward provided a brief update on the actions from the last meeting.

5. UKRLG Board updates

Graham noted the difference of approaches by the Boards in terms of the number of actions and variance of this.

UK Network Management Board

Mark Kemp provided an update noting the main focus at the last meeting was on business planning, including links with NTMF. Mark noted concerns about the DMRB review but said that Wayne Duerden had picked this up.

Mark said that he made a useful contact with Steve Gooding of the RAC Foundation. Mark said that a potential workshop with the Foundation on the issues of construction traffic could be useful. Graham asked for any comments on the Business Plan. Nicola responded on the DMRB review saying that a meeting was planned with DfT, Highways England and local authorities on Monday to discuss this. Graham asked about vehicles used as weapons (linking to security issues associated with CPNI) and Mark noted the Board was focused on need to increase awareness about risks associated.

Bill Barker noted the major road schemes on the trunk road network due to construction traffic was a significant issue but that forestry traffic was also an issue in rural areas. Darren added that agriculture traffic and changes in weights in Wales has been resulting in significant issues with deterioration. Mark noted that the agenda on housing development was also significant.

UK Asset Management Board

Garry Sterritt noted the Board was interested in reviewing the asset management guidance on the UKRLG website to ensure relevance. The Board was interested in carrying out a survey to review the asset management sector.

Garry said that the uptake and use of tools for the sector, and perhaps why they are not used, was also a useful focus of the Board. Garry said that the financial focus of maintenance and socio-economic benefits (for instance by Transport Scotland) had been useful and that the Board was looking to bring together a consistent way of articulating this.

Pull together information on the state of the assets overall, working with the other Boards – for instance the state of the roads, the bridges, lighting stock. Garry added that there are data sets that can be used and that by drawing on what already exists would be useful (e.g. Whole of Government Accounts).

Graham reflected back on the comment by Darren earlier on work on the state of the condition of the asset in Wales (Welsh Assembly Committee call for evidence). Hugh Gillies said that the severity of the winter has resulted in deterioration of the condition of both the strategic and the local road network. Hugh said that advice was being provided to Ministers and that Transport Scotland were looking at what the issues of condition were like across Europe. Graham said that the winter has provided an opportunity to wider questions about the long-term impact and what the lessons of this tell us about the State of the Asset.

John Irvine noted big concerns of life expired columns for street lighting, with a recent fall off the Foyle Bridge, another aspect in addition to deterioration of road condition.

UK Bridges Board

Boundary issue – has been passed to the ADEPT Bridges Group has collated comments for sharing with Highways England. Bill Barker said that the boundary document in Scotland had still not been agreed by Local Authorities in Scotland.

Bridge Inspector Certification Scheme – as Chair of the Board, Liz Kirkham has written to LANTRA. Additionally a survey has been initiated to review the uptake of the Scheme.

Liz noted the 3 tonne weight limit increased to 3.5 tonne weight limit would result in significant work.

Graham reflected that it was great to see such good participation in the Board meeting.

UK Roads Board

James Bailey noted a key focus had been on the FCMG work, and that all the sub-groups have been active. James said that a couple of themes emerge: research and the continuing uncertainty around HMEP. The next meeting will focus on the development of Visual Surveys.

John Irvine noted the issue on trees that had been picked up by the Board. The Group

noted a number of issues related to this: the Coroner's report following a fatality in Bracknell, chalara dieback of ash and so on.

UK Lighting Board

Lindsay provide a brief overview noting that a lot of the focus was picking up on the actions following the Urban Big Data Centre and links with Sheffield University. Lindsay said that, if there was research funding, then a project on level of lighting and links with crime and road safety would be useful. There was also a discussion on column failures on the Highways England network, changes on DMRB, health and lighting and the state of the nation on street lighting.

Lindsay said that his work at the Scottish Futures Trust had concluded and the Group agreed that Lindsay could Chair the next UK Lighting Board. The Group thanked Lindsay for all his work.

Hugh Gillies left the meeting at this point.

6. Code of Practice

Survey on the implementation of Well-managed Highway Infrastructure

James Bailey noted that October 2018 was coming up soon for implementation of the Code.

James said that the survey could be an optimistic reflection of the position and that the authorities that were maybe struggling with the implementation of the Code might not have replied to the Survey. Steve Berry said that the legal and insurance sector have raised concerns about implementation. Additionally, the engagement with neighbouring authorities was not as good as expected.

Steve Berry has been in discussions with Atkins and has agreed that further workshops (involved legal experts) would be helpful. Steve said that overall progress is good, but that some further work was required.

Graham highlighted some concerns in both how to apply the principals set out in the Code and what the rationale might behind the new Code might not be fully understood. Graham added that he did feel the need for an extra push on the Code.

Steve added that Andy Warrington was working up a proposal for UKRLG in terms of wider support. Mark Stevens said that at the visibility of the survey might not have been as good as it could have been when it was circulated as he had not seen a copy of this.

Action: Steve Berry to draft a letter to be sent out on behalf of the UKRLG to Chief Executives in highway authorities on the implementation of the Code noting some of the findings from the survey, reminding authorities that the Code will come into place by 28 October 2018 (noting need for workshops). UKRLG members to support circulation of letter to ensure that this gets circulated.

Action: Review the Code

Steve noted that a number of the highway alliances had been considering the implementation of the Code.

Code of Practice – trees

James Bailey noted the proposed change from the UK Roads Board in Well-managed Highway Infrastructure. A number of points were raised including legal and communication issues.

Action: Steve Berry to work with Atkins to amend the Code regarding clause B.5.4.2

Steve Berry said that the UKRLG should include a standing item on the agenda 'amendments to the Code' as any change would require agreement by the UKLRG. Liz Kirkham asked if there was the option to sign-up to alerts for changes.

Action: Justin Ward to consider how to alert people to updates of the Code of Practice

7. Review of Design Manual for Roads and Bridges

Nicola provide a brief summary noting the workshop mentioned previously, articles on the topic in Transportation Professional, including the article by Spencer Palmer that was written in the CIHT pages.

Nicola then noted the documentation on Local Application Annexes would be discussed in the DfT meeting on Monday and this would consider the issues raised by the UKRLG Boards. Nicola said that Highways England would not develop the Local Application Annexes, but that approaches have been made to ADEPT, HMEP, DfT etc.

Action: DfT to report back on the feedback on the meeting

8. Future actions with Urban Big Data Centre

Graham provided an update on the work with the UBDC.

Justin mentioned the work by the University of Westminster that might be of interest regarding cycling and risk.

9. Research funding

Graham noted that some of the really good work discussed earlier has come out of the past research work.

Steve Berry said that DfT have agreed with Ministers that any surplus money from Highways Maintenance Incentive Element Funding will be put to research budgets. This year £500,000 has been secured for research processes. There are some ongoing issues such as the maintenance of the Code, that some work has been agreed with Atkins to provide this role.

Help to Local Authorities for implementation of the Code would also involve drawing down on some of this work.

Steve outlined the next steps to accelerate the process going forward.

Action: Board Chairs to provide a list of ideas for research by end of May 2018 that could be taken forward and agree funding through correspondence

Action: Arrange virtual meeting end May 2018 to agree proposals

Steve said that collaboratively funded research would be very helpful e.g. with the Scottish Roads Research Board.

Steve said that research has to have real value to the sector, and as such decided to filter requests through the Boards as opposed to opening up views to all highway authorities.

Action: Justin Ward to share previously developed research proposals for UKLRG
[completed 24 April 2018]

Graham requested UK-wide proposals would be helpful.

Action: Bill Barker to share SRRB research proposals – that would help avoid duplication, seek synergies or look to develop alternative routes to procurement
[completed - The current and completed research projects are detailed on the SRRB website via: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/industry-guidance/scottish-road-research-board/#45123>]

Lindsay McGregor noted the development of TR22 produced by the ILP. This document approaches a risk-based approach to assessing the structural condition of lighting columns. Lindsay said that he did not want this to be lost in the handover process.

Action: Steve Berry to work with Lindsay McGregor on the TR22 work and funding of that

Nicola Debnam said that research by Highways England. Innovation designated funds was another element (only for capital).

UKRLG thanked Steve Berry for all his work to secure the approach to funding.

Street light conversions to LEDs

Lindsay McGregor gave a presentation on conversions to LEDs highlighting costs savings in Scotland from conversions, but had secured data on Wales also. The UKRLG noted the maintenance savings can be considerable, and Lindsay added that SOX lamps are starting to be discontinued.

10. Any other business

None noted.

11. Feedback on meeting

Darren Thomas said that last time connecting remotely was not as useful as being in the meeting.

12. Date of next meeting

11 July 2018