

Minutes of the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), held on 3 April 2012 at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)

Present:

Derek Turner	UK Network Management Board (Chaired the meeting)
Mostaque Ahmed	DfT
Roy Brannen	Transport Scotland
Paul Hersey (substituting for Steve Berry)	DfT
Andrew Jones	Highways Agency
Richard Morgan	Welsh Assembly Government
Andrew Murray	UK Roads Board/DRD Northern Ireland
Dana Skelley	UK Lighting Board
Mike Winter	UK Bridges Board
Justin Ward	CIHT (Secretariat)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Derek Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that he was chairing the meeting as John Dowie was unable to attend. Apologies were recorded for John Dowie, Steve Berry and Sue Percy.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Actions arising: Andrew Jones confirmed that the boundary issue was being progressed.

3. Minutes of Board meetings

UK Bridges Board

Mike Winter highlighted that there was quite a turnover of board members in a short period of time with Bob Flitcroft, Andy Phillips, Bill Valentine, Graeme Brown and Brian Bell all leaving the Board.

Mike said the Board was represented at SatNav summit and that the views of bridge owners was conveyed at the summit. The Group confirmed that leadership on the issue of appropriate HGV routing on SatNav systems was being led by Derek Turner through the UK Network Management Board but that specific issues related to bridge data would be handled by the UK Bridges Board.

Mike talked through a number of other updates from the Board. Mike said that ADEPT had not agreed to fund research on guidance on inspections for hidden components. He explained that the proposed guidance would bring together existing work and develop concise guidance by signposting practitioners to relevant documents. Mike said the UK Bridges Board would be seeking support from the UKRLG to carry out this work.

Mike raised the point made in email correspondence with John Dowie on future work for the bridge sector to look at horizon scanning for risks to the sector. Andrew Jones said an approach to develop guidance for practitioners should focus first on pulling together existing information and then identifying gaps. Mike said that he would look to bring together a few experienced bridge experts to develop a strategic level risk register. The group said that anything too sophisticated becomes very site specific. Roy Brannen asked what was currently covered by the Code of Practice Management of Highway Structures and Mike confirmed that issues related to flooding, fire and scour were currently not included in the Code. The group agreed that the practitioner's toolkit on risk identification should be included within Management of Highway Structures.

Action: Mike Winter to draft a brief proposal for the development of a bridge risk scanning/register

Mike asked about the M4 situation and Derek Turner explained that Highways Agency had advised drivers that a weight restriction is in place on the M4 between junctions 2 and 3. Derek said the restriction was a precautionary measure, after a scheduled inspection on the Boston Manor viaduct identified cracks in some of the welds in the steel beams.

Action: Neil Loudon to provide an update on the M4 situation and inspection of the Boston Manor viaduct at the next UK Bridges Board meeting

Andrew Murray asked about the scope of the UK Bridges Board work and asked if other structures were addressed by the Board – tunnels, retaining walls and general geotechnical issues. Mike said that the board has links to the Geotechnical Asset Owners Forum (through Stephen Pottle) and that they should pick up issues relating to tunnels (although tunnels are not covered within the Management of Highway Structures).

Action: Mike Winter and Justin Ward to contact the Tunnels Owners Forum to ensure coverage at the UK Bridges Board of the forum

UK Lighting Board

Dana Skelley provided an overview of the work of the UK Lighting Board, noting that they would try and engage with Ofgem. Dana said that the Board had responded to the National Measurement Office (NMO) consultation on the 500 watt rule and that this was an issue the Board had raised with the NMO.

Dana said that the Board was due to finalise a Lighting Policy Document that would be helpful for the sector.

Dana also said that the UK Lighting Board was still going to engage on the issue of illumination of signs following the publication of the Traffic Signs Policy Review. Dana said it is clear that the current prescriptive requirements for the illumination of traffic signs in England, Wales and Scotland are out of step with the rest of Europe and beyond. Dana said the Board feels that the funds expended on the direct illumination of traffic signs are

disproportionate to the benefits gained and do not represent best value for money in terms of delivering a safe road network. Dana said she would write to Norman Baker and raise these concerns to him from the UK Lighting Board.

UK Roads Board

Andrew Murray said that Chris Capps had been working to develop a self-funding model for UKPMS and had established the Interim Road Condition Steering Group. Andrew confirmed that the steering group would be solely comprised of public sector representatives, but that the working group would be a cross sector group. Andrew said a decision about where the new group would report had still to be made.

Andrew said that the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG) had requested TRL to carry out a review of the NWSRG Winter Service Guidance against Well-maintained Highways. The Group agreed that any update to the guidance must be issued in time to ensure no ambiguity in the delivery of winter guidance.

Andrew said that he was reviewing the funding for the UK Roads Board subgroups. The Board agreed that the business planning process was the control mechanism in funding the work of the Board and Sub-Groups.

Andrew reported that the UK Roads Board had concerns about a limited response from Local Highway Authorities on unclassified road statistics. The Group agreed that this information should exist as part of the process for data collection underpinning the whole of government accounts. Mike Winter said that in Dorset they are carrying out a 100% survey of the unclassified network and will repeat this in five years time, suggesting that an annual survey might not be relevant for all local highway authorities.

Andrew highlighted to that TfL representation was changing for the Board with Les Hawker being replaced by Andy Best.

UK Network Management Board

Derek provided a short overview of the work of the Board, highlighting that the Board was currently responding to the Traffic Order Advertising Consultation. Mostaque Ahmed said that Tony Boucher, who has taken over from Spencer Palmer at the Traffic Management Division, would be an appropriate representative for the Board.

Action: Mostaque to speak with Tony Boucher about his involvement with the UK Network Management Board

The Board discussed flooding issues.

Action: Steve Berry to contact Mike Winter on the details of the roundtable discussion that he is due to arrange with Defra

4. Board Business Plan exception monitoring

The Group noted that the Boards were progressing well with the work in their business plans and that there was nothing to highlight to the group on an exception basis.

5. Codes of Practice

Justin Ward explained that there was only a paragraph update to the Management of Highway Structures Code which the group approved. The other updates to the Well-maintained Highways and Well-lit Highways were just website links that needed updating.

Action: Atkins to update the Codes of Practice and email to Justin Ward for publication on the UKRLG website

6. Methodology/guidance on risk based assessment of structures

This was discussed in the update from the UK Bridges Board (see section 3).

7. Cross-asset decision making

The Group agreed that it had previously been decided to include reference to the approach used by Transport for London on cross-asset decision making in the update to the Transport Asset Management Guidance.

Action: Atkins to ensure that work on cross-asset decision making by TfL is included in the Transport Asset Management Guidance

8. Mapping the transport committee sector

The group reviewed the mapping work to look at how the work of Adept, UKRLG, TAG overlap and to look at individual involvement between these groups (as well as CIHT and the World Road Association). The group concluded that there was a communication issue that no single group provides complete coverage of all the local highway authorities.

Justin Ward said that he had developed a survey that would serve two purposes: firstly to allow individuals to sign-up to World Road Association (UK) communities of interest; and secondly, to map individual engagement with various transport groups.

The group briefly discussed the World Road Association and also discussed the potential role that the UKRLG could play in research dissemination. Roy highlighted a research report that the World Road Association UK (WRA UK) had produced that was used as an input to the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme and Scottish Roads Review. Roy said the report was very useful in explaining to politicians that the UK is performing well in how it operates its highway maintenance practices as the research focused on evaluating UK practices against a number of overseas countries. Justin Ward, who had written the report, said that CIHT has a system for conducting web calls that was very useful in helping source the information for the report.

Action: Justin Ward to amend the diagram to show that BOF is not part of the UKRLG but acts as an independent technical advisor to the UK Bridges Board

Action: Justin Ward to send out survey to map individual involvement in various transport groups

Action: Mike Winter and Justin Ward to seek a Corresponding Member from the UK Bridges Board to the WRA technical committee that focuses on bridges

Action: Mostaque to revisit the future of a research dissemination hub at the next UKRLG meeting

Action: Justin Ward to circulate a copy of the final report by WRA UK Road Maintenance Review International Comparison

9. UKRLG Business Plan

Justin Ward explained that he had been involved in a conference call with John Dowie and Sue Percy on the development of a UKRLG Business Plan. Justin said that John had identified a number of key priorities for the group with some already having been picked up on the agenda:

- The development of smarter guidance for Well-maintained Highways
- The mapping of overlaps between different transport organisations/committees
- The development of a UKRLG research hub
- Methodology/guidance on risk based assessment of structures
- Cross-asset decision making

Action: Justin to circulate a draft UKRLG Business Plan document in advance of the next meeting

10. Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme

Mostaque provided a brief update on the HMEP saying that in the short term the Potholes Review – Prevention and a Better Cure was due to be published on the 10 April 2012.

Action: Justin Ward to publish an embargoed copy of the Potholes Review in the members' area of the UKRLG website [completed]

In the longer term Mostaque explained that the development of asset management guidance and toolkits would be developed.

Roy provided a brief update on the Roads Maintenance Review in Scotland explaining that Ministers wanted to evaluate the efficiency and value benefits of that work. Mostaque said that the HMEP work was looking at benchmarking work but clarified that DfT can not mandate what Local Highway Authorities chose to do. The group agreed that it was very difficult to capture the economic benefits of maintenance works.

The group highlighted concerns with their lack of involvement with the update to the Transport Asset Management Guidance and agreed progress reports were required by.

Action: Atkins to provide progress reports with the latest draft of the Transport Asset Management Guidance to the UKRLG for review (similar to the COP update process)

11. Communication

The group agreed to a proposal for a UKRLG e-newsletter suggesting that it was coordinated in time with the publications of the updates to the Codes of Practice.

Action: Mostaque to include a note in the HMEP update email that people can register for a UKRLG e-newsletter by emailing Justin Ward (justin.ward@ciht.org.uk)

12. Any other business

There was no other business recorded.

13. Date of next meeting

26 July 2012.